

**STYLE, LEXICAL CHOICES AND MEDIA IDEOLOGY  
IN SELECTED ENGLISH-MEDIUM NEWSPAPER REPORTS  
ON NIGER DELTA CONFLICTS, 1997 – 2009**

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Media reports on Niger Delta (ND) crises in Nigeria have reflected a relationship between lexico-stylistic choices and reporters' ideological stances. Existing studies on these reports have, however, neglected this relationship, concentrating on general stylistic, pragmatic and discourse features. These features, which are concerned more with the linguistic and contextual dimensions to the reports than the interaction between the ideology and style used by newspaper reporters, have prevented a full understanding of group-induced motivations for the crises and reports. This study, therefore, investigated the styles, contexts and strategies that manifest in selected Nigerian newspaper reports of the ND conflicts with a view to establishing the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices in the reports.

The study adopted Lesley Jeffries' critical stylistics, Teun van Dijk's context model, and aspects of evaluative semantics and conceptual metaphor. One hundred and fifty reports on ND conflicts were sampled: 81 from four ND-based newspapers (NDPs): *The Tide*, *New Waves*, *The Pointer* and *Pioneer*; 69 from four national newspapers (NNPs): *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *THISDAY* between 1997 and 2009: two years before and after Obasanjo's 1999-2007 administration. While NDPs were selected based on their consistency in reporting on the conflicts, the NNPs were selected for their wider readership. The data were subjected to stylistic analysis.

Three styles, influenced by specific ND issues and context, characterise the lexical choices in the newspaper texts – evaluative, manipulative and persuasive styles; they are achieved through four stylistic strategies: naming/describing, equating/contrasting, hypothesising, and viewing actions/events. The evaluative style is represented by emotive metaphors from three source domains – crime, hunting, and military – that name the news actors, their violent encounters, locations, and roles. The manipulative style is indexed by synonymous, hyponymous, and meronymous lexical items and intentional material actions that highlight the effect of armed struggle in the discourse. The persuasive style is realised with reiterations, lexical fields and collocations that appear as appositional and intensive relational equivalences, exploited to present the struggling situations engaged in and social labels given to the news actors. Three media ideologies are observed: propagandist, framist, and mediator ideologies. Propagandist ideology, dominated by viewing actions/events and naming/describing, is represented by reiterations and collocations used to construct the ND violence as war and threat. Framist ideology, associated with naming/describing, is enacted by reiterative and emotive labels relating to sabotaging and sanitising, which assess the news actors and their intentions in positive/negative terms. Mediator ideology, associated with hypothesising and equating/contrasting, is constructed with reiterations, lexical fields and collocations that express epistemic and boulomaic meanings, which project news actors' views that align with those of the news reporters'. Thus, propagandist ideology motivates the persuasive style; framist ideology, the evaluative style, and mediator ideology, the manipulative style.

The styles in newspaper reports on Niger Delta conflicts, deployed through lexical relations and stylistic strategies, are motivated by the reporters' ideological roles as propagandists, framists and mediators in the discourse. Therefore, there is a close interaction between lexico-stylistic choices and ideological positions in ND media reports.

**Key words:** Style, Media ideology, Niger Delta conflict, Lexical indices.

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Chuka Fred ONONYE  
February, 2014.

## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by Mr. C. F. ONONYE in the Department of English, University of Ibadan.

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## DEDICATION

This milestone is  
With deep sigh of relief and accomplishment  
Proudly dedicated to my dearest friend and fiancée  
– Ms Nwando Irene Mbanefo –

Who has, more than any other female in my life,  
Shown an encouraging confidence in (me and) the end of education.

*Ndom, this one is for 'us'...!*

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS –	Critical Stylistics
CL –	Critical Linguistics
CDA –	Critical Discourse Analysis
H&H –	Halliday and Hasan
SFL –	Systemic Functional Linguistics
CofS –	Context of situation
NG –	Noun group
V –	Verb
VP –	Verb phrase
‘X’ –	Object/Complement/Adverbial
IMA –	Intentional material action
SMA –	Superventional Material action
MAE –	Material action event
RI	Intensive relations
RP	Possessive relations
RC	Circumstantial relations
MC	Mental cognition
MR	Mental reaction
MP	Mental perception
DS –	Direct speech
IS –	Indirect speech
RS –	Report of speech
RSA –	Report of speech act
FGN –	Federal Government of Nigeria
JTF –	Joint Task Force
ND –	Niger Delta
NAOC –	Nigerian Agip Oil Company
SPDC –	Shell Petroleum Development Company
NDDC –	Niger Delta Development Commission
NNP –	National paper (Newspaper)
NDP –	Niger Delta-based paper (Newspaper)
DO –	Disruption of oil operations

CC –	Conflict control
AS –	Armed struggle
HA –	Human abduction
ORC –	Ownership and resource control issues
IET –	Inter-ethnic issues
ECO –	Ecological issues
POL –	Political issues
SOCA –	Social actions
GLOAC –	Global action
LOCAC –	Local action
PRR –	Participant role relations
SETT –	Setting
OEx –	Oil-exploration area
OSv –	Oil-servicing area
Ub –	Urban area
Ru –	Rural area
Ck –	Creek area
EVAL –	Evaluative style
MANI –	Manipulative style
PERS –	Persuasive style
N/D –	Naming/describing strategy
VA/E –	Viewing actions/events strategy
E/C –	Equating/contrasting strategy
HYP –	Hypothesising strategy
LX REL –	Lexical relations
METPH –	Metaphors
COLL –	Collocations
PROP –	Propagandist ideology
FRAM –	Framist ideology
MEDI –	Mediator ideology

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

#### 1.1 Preamble

The general aim of this study is to provide a stylistic account in which certain lexical forms and relations, which mark the styles used by newspaper reporters, are systematically related to a set of stylistic strategies, with a view to establishing a link between lexico-stylistic choices and the media ideologies prompting them. The current chapter presents a background to the study and situates it within the framework of critical language study. It also clarifies some fundamental issues relating to the topic of the study. These range from the brief history of media practice in Nigeria, media ownership and control, context and discourse of news reporting, to the Niger Delta conflict and the Nigerian politics.

#### 1.2 Background to the study

The press – all over the world – is largely believed to treat issues in the news with transparency and neutrality; that is, carefully collecting facts, objectively presenting them without bias, in a language designed to be unambiguous and agreeable to readers. However, this professional ethos, which is certainly what the journalist maintains in any general statement, has been questioned by scholars working on media discourse, who argue that news is not free from the moderations of its purveyors to suit their ideological purpose. Fowler, for example, claims that “news is constructed or made or is a social construction of reality” (1991: 2). For Tuchman, “news ... is a constructed reality processing its own internal validity” (1978: 97); while in Hall *et al's* (eds) view, “news is the end-product of a... systematic sorting of events and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories”

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(1978: 53). It is in support of these submissions that van Dijk concludes that the media and their socially constructed discourse are handed down as “the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies” (1999: 36).

All these conceptions of the press and its news point to two facts. First, that news is a representation of the world in language; that is, it constructively patterns what it speaks through the semiotic structure, which language imposes (Fowler, 1991: 4-5). Secondly, the “mediation” or “representation”, using Fowler’s (1991) terms, in the media allows them to maintain their position: either in circulating and reinforcing dominant ideologies or (less frequently) undermining or challenging such ideologies. This is mainly achieved through conscious stylistic strategies with lexical plotting of the news text, which invariably, like any representational discourse, influences such discourse forms as those of rhetoric and style. Such lexico-stylistic choices, according to van Dijk (1988: 116), also have clear social and ideological implications, because they often signal the opinion of the reporter about news events and participants, as well as group-induced motivations for the events.

The foregoing background falls in line with our assumption that the newspaper reports (making up our data) provide an avenue through which the Nigerian news media reconstructs or represents the Niger Delta conflicts to suit their ideological positions. Therefore, in order to account for the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices, a critical stylistic analysis becomes necessary. It is, therefore, our intention in this study to investigate the issues and contexts in the Niger Delta conflict, the styles and stylistic strategies used by the newspaper reporters, and their ideological implications with respect to the crisis region.

### **1.3 The media**

Journalism, apart from printing, is said to be the oldest of the modern occupation in Nigeria; indeed, there were newspapers and journalists before lawyers, doctors, engineers and educationists (Odeyemi, 1994). This is not to say that the print media originated from Nigeria, or that Nigerians were the earliest purveyors of news. As far back as 1704, Daniel Defoe’s *Review* and Benjamin Franklin’s *General Magazine* had been in print as the first magazines ever published in England and the United States, respectively (see Binter, 1989). However, whereas the European press started with the magazine, the history of journalism in Africa, particularly in Nigeria,

actually began with the evolution of the newspaper. The origin and historical analysis of the press in Nigeria can be categorised into three periods, namely:

- a. the press in the pre-nationalist era (1859-1920);
- b. the press in the period of nationalist movement (1920-1960); and
- c. the press in the post-nationalist era (1960-till date).

In the pre-nationalist era, the first newspaper in Nigeria was *Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba* (*Iwe Irohin*, for short), founded on December 3, 1859, by Reverend Henry Townsend of the Presbyterian Mission. This was a Yoruba/regionally-based paper, established in Abeokuta; and its circulation covered only Abeokuta and Lagos. *Iwe Irohin* would equally provide inspiration for subsequent publications, which included *Anglo-African* published in 1963 by Robert Campbell. Although this paper folded up two years later for lack of patronage, it especially gave a boost to indigenous paper movement in Nigeria, with Richard Beale Blaize's (of Yoruba and Sierra Leone origin) *Lagos Times*. The collapse of *Lagos Times* in 1883 triggered the bi-weekly newspapers, *Lagos Observer* (by Blackall Benjamin), and *Eagle* and *Lagos Critic* (both by Owen Macaulay). Other papers, which were occupied with the socio-economic and (particularly) political issue at that time, included *Lagos Weekly*, *Lagos Spectator* (1893), *Lagos Echo*, *The Lagos Standard* (1894), *Lagos Reporter* (1898) (Omu, 1978). But among these early newspapers, *Iwe Irohin* was the only notable one published in native African (Yoruba) language. Generally, these papers had very short term of existence, "which explains why their impacts weren't much felt though they succeeded in creating awareness among the indigenous people" (Odeyemi, 1994: 20).

During the period of nationalist movement, the newspapers published were principally used for nationalist struggle. Three major characteristics have been identified with the press of this period. First, the newspapers were the mouthpiece of the people for the achievement of political independence. Second, there was a considerable increase in their circulation, compared with newspapers of the pre-nationalist era, a fact which marked this period as the era of mass circulation of the press. Another remarkable feature of this period is the 'Nigerianness' of the press. The identification of newspapers with the name 'Nigeria' as it is used in modern Nigerian print media, "began [around this period] with the introduction of the name 'Nigeria'

after the establishment of the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria [by Lugard's constitution of 1914-1922]" (Chiluwa, 2005: 19).

Of course, the first group of papers of this period (*Nigerian Chronicle*, published in 1908 by the Johnsons; *Nigerian Times* and *Nigerian Pioneer*, published in 1914 by James Davies and Kitoyi Ajasa, respectively) was criticised as supportive of the colonial government. To make up for this gap, more indigenous papers were introduced. For example, Ernest Ikoli's *African Messenger* (1915) and Adeoye Adenuga's *Eko Akete* (another Yoruba weekly set up in 1922) were published "in response to the revival of cultural nationalism, and...were devoted to the cause of freedom and justice for the black Africa" (Chiluwa, 2005: 20). Ikoli and Adenuga's audacious steps were taken by other nationalists, who practised even a more vigorous journalism. In this regard, Herbert Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* (1927) was notable with its 'firebrand' style, which earned it the name "the paper with a punch". Other papers by vibrant nationalists included *Nigerian Daily Telegraph* (started in 1927 by Antus Williams, but failed later owing to instability), *Nigerian Daily Mail* (emerged in 1930 by Ernest Ikoli), *West African Nationhood* (1933, by J.C. Zizer), *The Comet* (1933, Duse Mohammed Ali), etc (Omu, 1978: 68). These newspapers and pamphlets were among the major influences in the awakening of racial and political consciousness amongst Africans. The inauguration of *West African Pilot* in 1937 by Nnamdi Azikiwe gave the Nigerian press a new dimension. It injected into Nigerian journalism a new idealism of nationalism as well as methods of political and critical journalistic propaganda. Generally, it was indeed as a result of the press activities (role) of this period that earned the country its independence. In fact, Nigeria's political freedom was mainly fought and won by the nationalist press.

The post-independence period was initially regarded as the 'era of nation building.' There was a tremendous government participation in the newspaper industry. Those newspapers that were hitherto owned and controlled by private individuals and groups were now being taken over by either the federal or state governments. The incorporation of the Nigerian National Press Limited, the establishment of the *Morning Post* in October 1960, and *Sunday Post* in 1961, was immediately done by the federal government. The western government established the *Daily Sketch* in 1964, while *The New Nigerian* was launched in Kaduna in 1966 by the northern region government. Although further press activities were immensely

disrupted between 1966 and 1979 (during the military coups and counter-coups, the creation of states, and the eventual transfer of the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja), the role of the press was equally changing in the light of the political instability. The result of this was a highly politicised Nigerian press, especially in the Second Republic, which is termed “the Nigerian press sycophantic era” (Odeyemi, 1994: 24-5). During this period, there was a shift in the press orientation from the nationalistic struggle to that of reinforcing political and tribal loyalties, which interfered with the goal of nation building – national unity and integration. Thus, the press became parochial in its content. Newspapers publicly or privately owned by politicians, such as the *Daily Times* (owned by the federal government), the *National Concord* (M.K.O. Abiola), the *Tribune* (Obafemi Awolowo), among others, are a good example of this sycophancy. However, other ones such as *The Punch* (Olu Aboderin), *The Guardian* (Alex Ibru), *Vanguard* (Sam Amuka-Pemu), etc., because of their non-political posture, were notably more neutral in their activities.

### **1.3.1 Media ownership and control**

Media ownership and control are terms normally used together to describe the practice whereby increasingly fewer persons manage increasing share of the mass media, which is credited with shaping a society's way of thinking. By ownership (and hence control) of the media is also meant the factors that determine the responsibilities of the press to the society. The assumption here is that the bodies that own and control the press determine the types of press and (eventually) the nature of the polity in a society. According to Hodgson (1990), the state contributes the most among the forces that define the operational ambit and autonomy of the press. Justifying the state's control of the press, Moge kwu (1990) opines that by operating within the parameters of government philosophy, the press can inspire both the government and the populace to work for national development. This functional view sees the media as no different from other institutional organs of the social system such as the family or health sector, whose role is to contribute to the maintenance of the entire system.

The most important mechanism of the society for the control of the media on a day-to-day basis is the law. In almost every civilised society, specific laws are instituted which have implications for media processes and coverage. As Hartley (1982) notes, the state sets the limit for ‘freedom of the press’ or ‘free’ comment, and

is often interested in only those areas it defines as affecting national security. Media laws such as sedition and libel are a good example here. Yusuf (1990) refers to this direct media control by government as “statutory censorship,” which affects both the private and public media. Alternatively, media practitioners generally view press laws as unnecessary intervention in a sphere that should operate freely or at least within the confines of its own professional code of practice. Ekpu, (quoted in Haastrup, 1994: 18), describes the state control of the media as “such a big crime.” He further points out that it is a way by which the government and its agencies “assume themselves at the expense of the press.” The press-versus-state argument is indeed a protracted one, and there has been a growing interest on the issue of ownership and its effects on media performance: how *neutral* is the news when, in fact, it is sourced from and disseminated in a society where the government or other owners of capital, in one way or the other, dictate its (media) processes of selection and representation. This is also a relevant question to the present study.

Apart from the government, other private individuals and business groups have been in competition over the establishment and control of press organs, the result of which is a public-private ownership pattern in the Nigerian newspaper industry. Public papers “comprise those which owe their funding, general sustenance and [consequently] control, to the government; be it federal or state” (Haastrup, 1994: 6). Characteristically, papers in this category, like government radio and television stations, regrettably, turn out to be mouthpieces of the government. Examples of public newspapers in Nigeria are *Daily Times* and *New Nigerian*, both of which are owned by the federal government. The *Daily Sketch* is jointly owned by Oyo, Osun, Ogun, and Ondo states. Other government-run but ‘people-owned’ papers include *Daily Star* and *National Light* (in Anambra State), *New Waves* (Bayelsa State), *The Pointer* (Delta State), *The Tide* (Rivers State), *Pioneer* (Akwa Ibom State), *Nigerian Chronicle* (Cross River State), *Observer* (Edo State), among others.

Private newspapers, on the other hand, are those “which operate either as a branch of some private business conglomerate or is owned by an individual or group of [like-minded] individuals” (Haastrup, 1994: 7). Apart from operating within the prescriptions of relevant press laws and/or policies in the country, they are not subject to direct control by the government. The Concord Press Group (established 1980), which publishes *National Concord*, *Weekend Concord*, *Sunday Concord* and sundry

community and vernacular papers, is one example in this category. Other notable private newspapers comprise *Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch*, *THISDAY*, *Daily Champion*, *The Nation*, *The Sun*, to mention but a few. As government papers circulate, reinforce or protect the dominant ideologies of the government, so do the private ones – although often set up as commercial ventures – also project the political views and business goals of their owners.

### 1.3.2 Discourse of news reporting

The descriptions of the “inverted pyramid structure” provided in the literature on news reporting (e.g. Rich, 2000; Thomson, White and Kitley, 2008) typically make one claim; namely, that the opening of a news event is most typically represented with the “climax or most important information” coming first and the less significant afterwards (Thomson *et al.*, 2008: 13). van Dijk (1991), in his schematic structure of news reports, separates two elements from the opening: “a headline element” and “a lead element”. The headline(s) and lead sentence can be seen as representing a single unit because, in most cases, the lead exactly repeats a sub-set of the informational content of the headline, serving simply as signpost for the key points, which will be presented more fully in the following sentences. This interdependence can be seen as an artefact of the news production process, since headlines are typically written not by the reporter alone, but at an underlying stage, by an editing body who typically seeks a headline that sums up the lead (Rich, 2000: 12).

Most typically, the news story begins by setting out a sub-set of the incidents, which constitute the activity sequence being described. Thus, the incidents outlined in the headline/lead are represented just as they would be if the activity sequence were being described in full and in chronological sequence. On the contrary, in the opening of the typical news report, the original activity sequence can be said to have been reduced to its key and attractive elements by a process of elimination — the headline/lead opening is cut-down and re-ordered from the original activity sequence to provide a “synopsis” (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997) of the entire story. For example:

Again, Militants, Soldiers in Bloody Battle:

The ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militants ...broke down yesterday when heavily armed youths engaged men of the Joint Military Task Force on the Niger Delta (JTF) in a bloody battle at the Tunu Benisede Flow Stations....  
(*THISDAY* Mar. 31, 2006)

From both the headline and the lead opening here, the happenings of the event described have been classified into three: “bloody battle” as involving “militants” (who are also the Niger Delta militants or “heavily armed youths”) and the “soldiers” (also Federal Government or JTF).

The typical headline/lead opening, as seen from the *THISDAY* extract above, provides not simply a synopsis, but a value-laden description of an event, which is shaped by a particular set of assumptions about which aspects of events are typically more socially significant and which are less so. News report openings of this type, therefore, do not merely record events, they present a particular way of viewing and responding to those events as “natural” and “commonsensical” (Thomson *et al.*, 2008: 7). However, one important departure from the headline/lead opening model, which can be observed in some newspapers, is an arrangement under which the opening sentence performs a role different from the lead; for instance, setting out background information or providing a setting, and so on.

The second phase of the typical news report – the body, which follows the headline/lead - as serving to specify, elaborate and comment on the various strands of information presented in the opening. This, van Dijk (1991) splits into three terms, “an event element” (which provides a chronologically-ordered reconstruction of the event) and (optionally) an element, which gives ‘verbal reactions’ to the story, and a ‘comment’ element. It should be noted, however, that these specification and elaboration are typically presented non-chronologically and discontinuously (Iedema, Feez and White, 1994; White, 1997, 2000). In other words, events are seldom presented in continuous step-by-step sequence in the order in which they occurred; and when dealing with particular aspects or other related issues, the news report writer typically attends to these at different points in the body of the report, rather than dealing with it exhaustively in a single section. Studies (e.g. Iedema *et al.*, 1994; White, 1997; Thomson *et al.*, 2008, etc.) have demonstrated that the body of this type of report can be broken down into self-contained components, which typically perform one or more of the following functions in relation to the headline/lead:

- a. Elaboration or reiteration: one sentence or a group of sentences provides more detailed description or exemplification of information presented in the

headline/lead, or acts to restate it or describe the material in the headline/lead in different terms;

- b. Contextualisation: one or more sentences place some aspects of the crisis point of the headline/lead in a temporal, spatial or social context. For example, the geographical setting will be described in some detail, or the 'crisis point' will be located within the background of preceding, simultaneous or subsequent events. Prior events of a similar nature may be described for the purpose of comparison.
- c. Causes: one or more sentences describe the causes or reasons for some aspects of the 'crisis point' presented in the headline/lead;
- d. Consequences: One or more sentences describe the consequences flowing from some element of the crisis point of the headline/lead;
- e. Attitudinal assessment: one or more sentences may provide some form of judgement or evaluation or comment passed on some elements of the headline/lead.

This arrangement leads to a conceptualisation of such texts as involving a relationship between a central "nucleus" (the headline/lead) and a set of dependent sub-components, which can be thought of as "satellites" to that "nucleus" (Thomson *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the headline/lead dominates the text, providing its focus or angle with the subsequent satellites operating only to explain, elaborate or comment on material presented in that opening. The body of the text, therefore, does not develop new meanings but, rather, acts to refer back to the headline/lead through a series of specifications; and provides a closing in form of evaluative assessment or comment on the headline/lead elements.

#### **1.4 The Niger Delta: origins of the conflicts**

The Niger Delta (henceforth ND) has been defined in two ways – geographical and political, with population varying "between 27 and 12 million," respectively (Rowell, Marriott and Stockman, 2005: 8). Geographically, it comprises nine states of the country: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. In this sense, these states are considered sufficiently proximate enough to the Atlantic Ocean to fall within its delta zone. From this perspective, the population of the area would approximate the 27 million suggested by the authors. But in the political



sense of the ND, it would comprise the following six states of southern ethnic minorities only: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. In this case, Rowell *et al*'s (2005) population estimate of 12 million would suffice. In this study, much of the focus would be on the narrower, political sense since the crisis in the region can be as political as it is economic as will be shown in our analysis. In a nutshell, the peoples of the six core ND states, while being geographically within the delta region, are disadvantaged as ethnic minorities in a 'three-major-ethnic-group-dominated' nation. However, their neighbours – Abia, Imo and Ondo states – largely belong to two majority ethnic groups of Igbo and Yoruba, giving them much advantage over their ethnic minority co-wayfarers in this geographical vicinity of the delta. The core ND covers some 70,000 kilometres south-south of Nigeria.

Apart from its transformation from small idyllic fishing villages into powerful trading posts in dry fish and salt in the early sixteenth century, and before the present independence exploration of the region for crude oil, the ND region has been the epicentre of two major tragedies. In the words of the historian, Kenneth Dike:

The history of the Niger Delta...is to some extent an introduction to the economic and political history of Nigeria. This region became from the sixteenth century the main center of the African trade with Europeans in the Gulf of Guinea. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Delta was one of the most important, if not the leading, slave mart in West Africa. In the first thirty years of the nineteenth century when the trade in palm oil had begun to displace the trade in men it exported more oil than the rest of West Africa put together. (Dike, 1956: v; see also Maier, 2000: 119)

Thus, both the trade in men and the one in palm oil had left ineffaceable marks on the soil and psyche of the ND person even before the recent phase of the exploitation of the area for crude oil.

The origins of the ND conflict can be said to lie in the encounter of Africa with the West. Before the coming of the Europeans to Africa, trading, mostly by barter, was carried out among several African communities in a manner that no one was unnecessarily cheated. However, the autonomy enjoyed by each of those communities was lost once the Whites came in to carve the continent into economic zones among themselves. This carving, according to Ushie (2010), never considered the uniqueness of each of the groups before being yoked with other communities to form the various

states that emerged following the Berlin conference of 1884/1885, where the partitioning took place. This situation is aptly captured by Meredith (2006) thus:

...African societies were rent apart: the Bakongo were partitioned between French Congo, Belgian Congo and Portuguese Angola; Somaliland was carved up between Britain, Italy and France. In all, the new boundaries cut through some 180 culture groups. In other cases, Europe's new colonial territories enclosed hundreds of diverse and independent groups, with no common history, culture, language or religion. Nigeria, for example, contained as many as 250 ethno-linguistic groups. Officials sent to the Belgian Congo eventually identified six thousand chieftains there.... By the time the Scramble for Africa was over, some 10,000 African polities had been amalgamated into forty European colonies and protectorates. (Meredith, 2006: 1-2)

The foregoing offers a clear picture of how Nigeria was created – with its many ethnic minority groups of which those of the ND are inclusive – as a country. The ND groups had always been conscious of this forced integration, and have continued to show resistance to it whenever the need arose. This resistance, according to reports, pre-dates their 1914 amalgamation into Nigeria by Britain's Lord Lugard. For instance, in the face of abject poverty, hunger and hardship in the days of the trade in palm oil, King William Koko of Brass (in the modern day Bayelsa State) resolved in 1895 that: "If we Brass people die through hunger... we had rather go to them [the foreign traders] and die on their swords [sic]" (Maier, 2000: 122). Following this resolve, a group of some one thousand Nembe clan warriors attacked the camp of the Royal Niger Company at Akassa that year, "and took 67 men hostage, insisting that they would not be released until the company gave them access to their old markets in the hinterland" (Okonta and Douglas, 2001: 27; see also Maier, 2000: 122). Reacting to this, the Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate, through a group of naval men, launched a response attack and razed the hamlets "at Brass, Patini, and Asaba" to the ground (Maier, 2000: 120-122).

On the eve of Nigeria's independence, the apprehension (as the ND communities were said to have protested about their being handed over to another authority without their consent) about the fate of the minorities sandwiched among the three ethnic majority groups of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, led to the setting up, in 1958, of Sir Henry Willink Commission *Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them* (Maier, 2000: 123; emphasis mine). In Nigeria's ND,

the spirit of resistance against exploitation, as reported in the Nembe clan warriors' war against the Royal Niger Company at Akassa, and of resistance against domination, as necessitating Willink Commission, has not only been carried over into independent Nigeria,

...it has indeed been whetted by the exploitation of crude oil in the area in life-undermining conditions. The present phase of the oppression, suppression and exploitation of the people has thus rekindled their forefathers' helpless condition and their resistance to it. It was, hence, no surprise when, in the 1990s the Ijaw nation reincarnated the Egbesu cult which King William Koko and his men had used in their encounter with the Royal Niger Company in 1895. It was against this background that Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw, rose in independent Nigeria of the early 1960s against the ecological exploitation of the area amidst the hunger, poverty and disease of the people. (Ushie, 2010: 55)

Major Isaac Adaka Boro and others' protest against the predatory domination of their ND people by independent Nigeria was mainly motivated *inter alia* by the non-implementation of Willink Commission's report of 1958, the negation of the Republican Derivation Principle of 50 per cent resource control, the Petroleum Decree No. 51 of 1969 – transferring all oil mineral rights and revenue accruing from there to the Federal (military) Government.

In 1990, Kenule Saro-Wiwa, with other Ogoni elders, formed the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Among the specific demands contained in its Bill of Rights are “political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people” and “the right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development.” It was in further agitation that Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni persons paid the supreme price for this struggle as they were hanged by the government of General Sani Abacha on November 10, 1995. It was the execution of Saro-Wiwa and others in 1995, the razing of the ND community of Odi by the Obasanjo-led government in 1999, and the further perceived neglect by Nigerian governments that informed the recent wave of the ND crisis in the 1990s and 2000s.

With an estimated two million barrels of crude oil produced daily from it, “the area harbours over 95 percent of Nigeria's crude oil and gas resources, which account for 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings” (Ogbogbo, 2005: 169). While the oil-rich ND has attracted the world's top oil companies and huge corporate investment, the various Nigerian governments (both military and democratic) have

unduly exploited and depended on the 'oil wealth' from this region. Consequently, there has been a legion of problems resulting from the intense exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the area. Apart from the massive environmental degradation of the area, the minority status of its peoples has led to their political and economic marginalisation in the larger Nigerian federation. This has, over time, bred in the people a feeling of utter neglect, relegation and discrimination. In order to address the peculiarities of the problems confronting the region, the ND peoples have embarked on a long and continued struggle to control the resources of their region. This has led to a series of conflict between the oil bearing communities of the ND and the oil companies, on the one hand, and between the communities and successive Nigerian governments, on the other. These conflicts, in turn, have resulted in random violence, human rights violations, death and mass internment of the parties involved.

The violence in the ND has, in recent years, escalated and taken a new dimension. The peaceful and intellectual protests by Major Isaac Adaka Boro (in the 1960s) and Ken Saro-Wiwa (in the 1990s) have been supplanted with aggressive and bloody struggle by camps of armed youths in the creeks (Ushie, 2010). While the violent struggle has, over time, materialised into many forms, such as, bunkering and pipeline vandalism, kidnapping and hostage-taking, human and drug trafficking, robbery, communal clashes, etc, the different camps have resorted to the formation of numerous radical nationality groups, the most active of which include Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and Joint Response Command (JRC). It should be added that the incessant tribal wars among the local ND communities in the early 1990s had produced notable 'local warlords' like Asari Dokubo, Government Ekpempolo, Ateke Tom, etc.

The ND crisis has enjoyed much media coverage. In fact, the increasing protest by several ethnic and political groups in the region and the resultant violence, including the kidnapping of expatriate oil workers and clashes with the Nigerian military (Joint Task Force), has consistently been reported in the newspapers and other media within and outside the ND. Recently, the Nigerian government embarked on a programme whose aim was to address the needs of the people and redress their human right violations. This started with a political gesture, which has been popularised as 'Amnesty for the Niger Delta militants'. The sustainability of the programme seems

bright with President Goodluck Jonathan, the current Nigerian president, who is a native of the Niger Delta.

#### **1.4.1 The FGN's amnesty programme in the Niger Delta**

On assumption of office in May 2007, former Nigeria's President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua having the Niger Delta as one of his seven-point agenda, planned a meeting with the stakeholders in the region, from which a Niger-Delta Technical Committee was set up to collate and review all previous reports and recommendations on ways of resolving the conflict. To address the worrisome situation in the Niger Delta, and considering the failure of previous efforts at resolving the conflict, the Yar'Adua administration also created the Niger Delta Ministry to focus mainly on the affairs of the region. Thereafter, the Presidential Committee on Amnesty and Disarmament of Militants in the Niger Delta was set up and mandated to design a framework of disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation or reintegration of the militants (Lawal, 2007). This resulted in the presidential proclamation of amnesty on 25 June 2009, which lapsed on 4 October 2009, pursuant to section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process was followed by a monthly stipend for the ex-militants. An initial component of the programme was the payment by government of millions of dollars to the militant leaders for handing in their weapons at the outset. The FGN committee also met with the militant leaders to figure out ways of encouraging the insurgents in the Delta to abandon violence.

Educational and vocational classes were arranged for the ex-militants in foreign sites, such as Houston, London, Seoul and South Africa. In 2011, Nigeria's state oil company, Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) commenced paying Mujahid Dokubo-Asari \$9 million a year, by his account to pay his 4,000 former foot soldiers to protect the pipelines they attacked in the past. NNPC also signed a \$22.9 million-a-year contract with Government 'Tompson' Ekpemupolo to guard and maintain pipelines his boys used to attack. NNPC also gives \$3.8 million yearly apiece to Generals Ebikabowei 'Boyloaf' Victor Ben and Ateke Tom "to have their men guard Delta pipelines they used to attack. (Ubhenin, 2013: 186)

Three years after the proclamation of amnesty in the Niger Delta, violence has dropped and crude oil production has risen back up to 2.6 million barrels per day. But the amnesty is beginning to attract unpleasant comments from the oil industry watchers

and conflict analysts. According to the Amnesty International Report (2009), the amnesty has been described as a “gilded pacification campaign”, which the Nigerian government regards as “a success story. Most of the graduates from the vocational study sites have yet to be matched with jobs, the complex development-related issues have yet to be addressed, the disarmament process was not holistic, and there is a resurgence of criminal activities in the region. The Niger Delta has continued to witness an alarming rate of oil bunkering that takes away almost 20 percent in potential state revenue. Many militants who are not well paid and those not paid at all by the amnesty are finding their ways back to the creek. “Now oil theft appears to be on the rise again” (Ubhenin, 2013: 188).

#### **1.4.2 The main contentions of Niger Delta peoples**

From the foregoing, the following points, a large part of which were highlighted by Eteng (1996: 137-140), have been summarised as the main grievances of ND indigenes with both the FGN and the oil-working companies in the region (see also Ayoola, 2008). First, their grouse with the successive Nigerian governments include:

1. The entire Nigerian system became structured on “institutionalised social inequality”.
2. The Nigerian central government enacted laws that effectively disenfranchised oil communities.
3. Double standards were applied to the Principle of Derivation in respect of revenue allocation.
4. Oil revenue was diverted to the development of other regions to the neglect of the ND region.
5. Government response to community violence was too heavy-handed and counter-productive.

Their allegations against the oil companies are also detailed as follows (see Eteng, 1996:140-142):

1. They colluded with the state to appropriate ancestral lands and to privatise violence.
2. They waged a deadly and comprehensive war against host communities.

3. They destroyed the traditional, economic and social lifeline of the oil region.
4. Their maximisation of crude oil production and other derivatives wreaked considerable havoc on the ecosystem of the community.
5. They failed to establish “deep, genuine and meaningful cordial relationships with their hosts”.
6. They aggravated the crisis in the region by flexing economic, politico-military as well as legal muscles.

### **1.5 Statement of the problem**

In Nigeria, even as the oil-related politics and the resultant conflicts in the ND have continued to affect the economic stability and social peace in the country, media practitioners have frequently used their news reports as an effective tool for ideological representation to favour the different groups they support in the conflicts. Hence, there exists an observable relationship between the ideological positions of the media and the lexico-stylistic choices made in their reports of the ND conflicts. This relationship has, however, not been duly explored by language scholars on media discourse, thereby preventing a good understanding of the group-induced motivations for the conflicts and reports. In fact, from the survey of recent studies on the media and political discourses, the ND conflicts have rather yielded linguistic interests from pragmatic/CDA (e.g. Ayoola, 2008), CDA (e.g. Chiluya, 2011a, 2011b), and stylistic (e.g. Chiluya, 2007) perspectives. Ayoola (2008) used pragmatic tools in exploring the discourse strategies employed by news participants to foster specific ideologies; Chiluya (2011a) used CDA (but adds Corpus Linguistics in 2011b) to analyse the attitude of the press in representing the ND militia groups and their activities. Chiluya (2007) utilised the stylistic approach in investigating peculiar textual features used in news texts, but did not pay attention to ideological issues in the news reports.

These studies have generally provided insights into the linguistic and contextual dimensions to the media reports. However, what is strikingly absent in the media studies on the ND news discourse is an attention to the interaction between media ideology and styles and strategies used by newspaper reporters in relaying information on ND conflicts. Therefore, a large part of what remains to be done in this area is a thorough, systematic and theoretically-grounded critical-stylistic analysis of

media texts. This study, therefore, investigates the styles, contexts and strategies that manifest in Nigerian newspaper reports of the ND conflicts with a view to establishing the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices in the reports.

### **1.6 Aim and objectives of the study**

The study focuses on the styles and lexical choices used in ND conflict newspaper reports, showing their relationship with the ideological positions of their reporters. To achieve this aim, the study utilises the following objectives:

1. to identify and discuss the issues and contexts that have motivated the ND conflicts;
2. to account for the styles and stylistic strategies used by the news reporters in relaying information with respect to ND conflicts;
3. to discuss the ideological implications of the styles and stylistic strategies with regard to the conflictual events in the Niger Delta.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The scope of our data was delimited to only selected newspaper reports on conflicts and it ignored such complementary texts as interviews, follow-up news commentaries, and editorials on the newspaper reports. These complementary texts, no doubt, would have offered useful perception of the attitude of the media to the conflicts, but would also give us a wide range, which may not be adequately handled in one single study. The limitation of the data to newspaper reports is, therefore, meant to capture the events (and the reporters' positions) as first-hand information. The study has further restricted its focus to the lexical choices and stylistic or rhetorical dimensions (and, of course, their ideological bases) of the newspaper reports. Therefore, we paid attention also to aspects of lexical relational and evaluative semantics, conceptual metaphor theory, critical stylistics and concepts of style as they relate to the newspaper reports.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The study is expected to be of relevance in the following ways. The proposed critical stylistic model, utilised for the analysis of the ND conflict discourse, is expected to provide a new dimension in explaining the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices used in the reports, which will allow readers to fully



understand the group-induced function for the ND conflicts. Similarly, by pursuing the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices instead of focusing on the linguistic and contextual dimensions to the reports (as the previous studies have done), the present study is expected to widen the range of the existing literature on media discourse. This will provide a new path in the investigation of the discourse of violence both in Nigeria and the world at large. In addition, a landmark contribution is expected to be made to ideology discourse with the merging of context-oriented stylistics, socio-cognitive CDA, and evaluative semantics in the media reports.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we present the reviews of theories and concepts relating to style and ideology. Some of these include: evaluative (lexical) semantics, conceptual metaphor, critical language study and ideology. Also reviewed are previous empirical studies related to the present study, such as those on media discourse and political discourse. These enable us to respectively identify the theories relevant for the analysis of our data. The chapter is, therefore, developed in the following order: relevant concepts, theoretical framework and review of related literature.

#### 2.2 Relevant concepts

In this section, some concepts that are relevant to the analysis of our data are reviewed. They include: context (Halliday's model, context of situation), style and stylistics.

##### 2.2.1 Context: definition and scope

Context, as an essential factor in the interpretation of text, is a broad theoretical concept that is strictly based on relations of the structures of social situations and communicative events and how their relevant properties are related to the structures and strategies of text. Cruse (2006: 35) identifies the most important aspects of context as: the preceding and following utterances and/or expressions (linguistic context / 'co-text'), the immediate physical situation (physical context), the wider situation, including social and power relations (socio-cultural context), and the knowledge presumed to be shared between speaker and hearer (psychological context). These aspects relate to the four types of context classified in the literature.

It has widely been acknowledged in language-use scholarship that much of the meaning production that takes place through language depends essentially on context (Duranti and Goodwin, 1992). However, there is no consensus in terms of a single definition of how much or what sorts of context are required for language description. What this implies is that no single context model or set of processes will be analytically sufficient for all research; how one treats it depends on how one construes other basic elements including language, discourse, utterance production and reception, social practice, and so on.

The focus on context, as a confining factor and a product of discourse, has led to ever more fine-grained approaches to text, primarily in the formation of which language and context are articulated. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are diverse approaches to context with respect to the disciplinary preferences of researchers; “the significance of these developments for linguistics lies in the increased precision with which linguistic systems, cognitive processes, and language use are co-articulated” (Hanks, 2006: 119). For example, speech act proponents (e.g. Austin, 1962) see context as the relation between speech forms and circumstances as captured in felicity conditions; implicature and relevance theorists (Grice, 1989; Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995) focus on inference and belief attribution, but while the former anchor them on a cooperative commitment of both the speaker and hearer, the latter argue that context is the responsibility of the hearer, who provides whatever information is relevant in order to process the meaning of an utterance; conversation analysts (e.g. Sacks *et al.*, 1974) regard the face-to-face interaction as the primordial context for human sociality and the most important locus of observation of language; psycholinguists and cognitive linguists (e.g. van Dijk, 1999, 2002) treat context as a matter of mutual knowledge and cognitive representation, hence as a basically mental construct; ethnographers (e.g. Hymes, 1962; Gumperz, 1982) focus on the relevant structures of whole communicative events, which always include setting, participants, goals, etc; systemic functional linguists (e.g. Halliday, 1978) are concerned with the modelling of choice in language to show how the structures of discourse are to be defined in terms of the main dimensions of the ‘context of situation’; and so on.

These approaches to context are not only closely associated with linguistics, they also commonly treat context as built up utterance by utterance in the course of using language, because there are principles and kinds of relations that recurrently

organise contexts. Therefore, the guiding questions in selecting a model or models of context, as posed by (Hanks, 2006: 121), are: what are the units and levels of context that needs to be distinguished in order to give a rigorous account of language practice in a particular set of data? What are the relations and processes that give rise to different contextual units and levels? It is on these criteria that Halliday's social semiotic and van Dijk's socio-cognitive models of context, though at two opposing ends, are relevant to the present study. The main thesis of van Dijk's (1999, 2002) theory of context is that contexts should not be defined in terms of categories of social situation in which discourse takes place, but rather as a mental representation, or *model*, constructed by the speech participants *of* or *about* such a situation. However, while van Dijk's mental model is favoured (as part of our theoretical framework), aspects of Halliday's context of situation are relevant, as our analysis will demonstrate. For instance, the mental representations may not be formed but for the manifestations of the categories of social situation in discourse. This is also recognized by van Dijk (1999: 341) in his own words, "gender, age, roles, group membership or power of participants, among many other traditional properties of the situation of communicative events, can be relevant for discourse only when participants attend to them, and construct them as such." Therefore, we shall respectively review relevant aspects of Halliday and van Dijk's models of context in the sub-sections below.

#### **2.2.1.1 Halliday's model of context: context of situation (CofS)**

Halliday's conceptualisation of 'language in the context of a social semiotic system' is briefly reviewed by focusing on three major levels of abstraction in turn: language as system, language as institution, and language as metaphor of social reality. Language as system is related to the notion of choice. Halliday views the systemic network of choices as the major representation of an abstract metafunctional organisation of the linguistic system at clause rank, which trifurcate into the model options: ideational (transitivity: types of processes, participants and circumstances), interpersonal (mood: types of clause, e.g. declarative, interrogative, etc.) and textual (information structure: Theme/Rheme and Given/New). The metafunctions are said to be semantically-oriented terms which reflect the basic thrust of the grammatical model as one with a "rich *semantax*" (Martin, 1985: 249) rather than one favouring an autonomous syntax. The concept of the metafunctional organisation of the linguistic

system suggests a formal mechanism for relating choices at the levels of lexicogrammar and discourse semantics to choices at the level of context through an extension of the notion of choice or system in a technical sense (Plum, 1998: 23). The social-semiotic interpretation of language is thus motivated by the hypothesis that “the system of natural language can best be explained in the light of the social functions which language has evolved to serve. Language is as it is because of what it has to do” (Halliday, 1976a: 17).

Language as institution relates to language-in-use (cf. Hill, 1958). Speakers/writers’ (more or less) conscious ability to communicate successfully as social beings (depends largely on their functioning linguistically within an institution or culture) can only be understood in a model of social context, which in one sense ‘grammaticalises’ that context, and in another complementary sense, broadens the conceptualisation of language by ‘contextualising’ grammar (see Halliday, 1985: 41ff). Two kinds of variation are identified by Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964) as falling within the ambit of ‘language as institution’, viz. ‘variation according to the user’ and ‘variation according to use’, which respectively correspond to *dialectal* and *register* variations (cf. Reid, 1956; Gregory, 1967). It is register-type variation, which is considered to be meaningful in a very broadly defined way, that is relevant here considering the diverse situations under which our data are produced. The dialect-type variation is considered to be meaningful only in a very narrow way, essentially realising a language user’s social identity.

Research on register has been prominently associated with British linguistics since the 1930s, particularly with J.R. Firth and his students, and hence such work has been referred to as “British Contextualism” (Steiner, 1983). Although there are some differences between the various abstract contextual categories proposed, there is a sufficient degree of convergence of views for Halliday’s (1977) model to claim a degree of representativeness, especially in terms of his tri-partite categorisation of context into: field (ongoing social activity, subject matter), tenor (participant relations, social roles), and mode (symbolic organisation of text, role of discourse in the ongoing activity) (see Halliday, 1977: 200-203). Using this categorisation, Halliday’s (1978: 32) seeks to “uncover the general principles which govern [the variation in situation types], so that we can begin to understand what situational factors determine what linguistic features.” He argues that the relationship of ‘association’ generally assumed

by Firthian linguists to obtain between contextual categories (of field, tenor and mode) and linguistic categories (of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, reviewed above) is, in fact, a deterministic one. The concept of ‘text’ is, therefore, proposed as the one mediating between context and language, text being defined as a “SEMANTIC unit: a unit not of form but of meaning” (Halliday and Hasan – henceforth, H&H, 1976: 2; emphasis in original).

Halliday’s functional interpretation of language (i.e. with ‘language as system’ and ‘language as institution’) captures a conceptualisation of language in terms of the ‘reality’ of the world of its speakers/writers within which it functions. However, this role of language *vis-à-vis* reality, which obviously cannot be a direct one, is seen as “metaphorical” by Halliday: “... language, while it represents reality *referentially*, through its words and structures, also represents reality *metaphorically* through its own internal and external form” (Halliday, 1978: 191; emphases in original). Halliday ultimately suggests a way of investigating reality through language, stating that:

... as language becomes a metaphor of reality, so by the same process reality becomes a metaphor of language. Since reality is a social construct, it can be constructed only through an exchange of meanings. Hence meanings are seen as constitutive of reality. ...With a sociological linguistics we should be able to stand back from this perspective, and arrive at an interpretation of language through understanding its place in the long-term evolution of the social system. (Halliday, 1978: 191)

Understanding the place of language in the creation of reality, i.e. of social reality and ultimately of the social system (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1966), should equally, and simultaneously, lead to an understanding of those ‘realities’, even when they are made to be implicit as in the case of our news texts. The investigation of aspects of social reality, such as the transmission and maintenance of a given social system through, for example, different forms of writer/reader interaction, or the processes of shaping public opinion on a particular issue by the popular press, etc., has to proceed with an investigation of text to context. This, therefore, provides huge insights for our analysis of the implicit meanings in our ND conflict news texts. It is this understanding of the central role of text as the realisation of semantic choices in context, with language serving as a resource or potential for meaning-making, which has led a number of studies, such as the present one, to investigate the relationship

between language and social structure, and ultimately access ideological processes behind the social structure.

### 2.2.2 Style and stylistics

The concepts of style and stylistics though have received much scholarly attention, but have proven difficult to define. The first concept is so broad that it is hardly possible to regard it as a term. Style is reflected in virtually all constituents of human behaviour, which affects such actions as dressing, eating, sweeping, driving, speaking, writing, among others. Behavioural style, which is not relatable to stylistics, involves “personal choices made on a continuum of consciousness; all become unconscious as they are constantly repeated and become more and more a part of the person” (McMenamin, 2002: 135). Hence, once the style is developed, it remains with one. The result of behavioural actions may be approximately the same for everyone, but *how* one goes through the process to achieve the result will vary considerably from one individual to another.

In linguistics, style or how language is used also matters a lot and has become the study object of stylistics. Broadly speaking, style in language consists of prominent linguistic features, devices or patterns, most significantly occurring in a particular text of a particular genre, which are constrained by the purpose and situation of language use. What style is has always been open to dispute among linguists; thus, it has offered different meanings and impressions to different scholars. Crystal and Davy (1969), for example, distinguished four commonly occurring senses that the word has been associated with; namely, the language habit of one person, all or some of the periodic habits shared by a group, the effectiveness of the mode of expression, and the literary language. For Crystal and Davy’s (1969: 10), “of the above sense, the first and second come nearest to what [they] mean as style”, while the last two senses relate to adornment or embellishment in the use of language in literature, which the authors attempt to expand.

Crystal and Davy’s idea of style is also corroborated by Lawal, (2003: 27), who defines style as “some or all of the language habits of one person or a group of persons”. In Lawal’s view, certain manners of using language are associated with particular individual or group in terms of, for example, hesitation patterns, lexical choices, argumentation patterns, syntactic patterns, etc. This relates to a widely held

view that style is the correspondence between thought and expression, which is anchored on the expressive and communicative functions of language (Haynes, 1992; Toolan, 1998). What this means is that language serves as a means of shaping one's thoughts as expressed in the process of communication. This may motivate a language user to select particular linguistic items and patterns that will allow him/her to effectively convey his/her ideas regarding the desired effects (Simpson, 1993).

Leech and Short (1981: 10) present their own definition of style as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a person, for a given purpose." Leech and Short's is one of the modern ideas on style, which bring in a contextual tilt to the meaning of style. This idea of style in language use is further specified in Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (1982: 9), who state that "language also varies according to the use to which it is put ... Register can be used to refer to variation according to use, sometimes known as style." Following Halliday's linguistic framework, Leech *et al.* (1982) associated style with the different varieties language can take in terms of changes in the domain of use, participant roles and text type.

McMenamin (1993) holds a similar view that "style is not a uniform concept in language" (1993: 126), but concentrates on the mode of discourse alone. For him, style differs with respect to the language mode engaged by individuals or groups. For example, style in spoken language deals with linguistic variation resulting from the social context of interaction, guided by the topic and purpose of the interaction, as well as the social, cultural, and geographic characteristics of the interactants; while style in written language relates to the various ways that language is used in certain genres, periods, situations, and by individuals. However, the link between style and situations shows that writing does share the spoken language connection to social context (Besnier, 1988: 709). McMenamin's work underscores the demarcation between writing and speaking styles. Style in written language and its related concepts such as choice, variation, context, etc. are particularly crucial to the present study.

### **2.2.2.1 Approaches to style**

Style can be defined as the description and analysis of the variability forms of linguistic items in actual language use. Many approaches have been proposed (from the dated medieval/Rationalist style as "the dress of thought" and "manner of expression" of the writer (see Enkvist, Spencer and Gregory, 1971; Coulthard, 1995)



to the modern cultural perspectives) by scholars through which style can be studied in language based on their different perception of the concept. Some of the approaches relevant to the study of the written style are reviewed in this section, following Osundare's (2003) elaborate classification: style as choice, style as difference, and style as iteration.

#### **2.2.2.1.1 Style as choice**

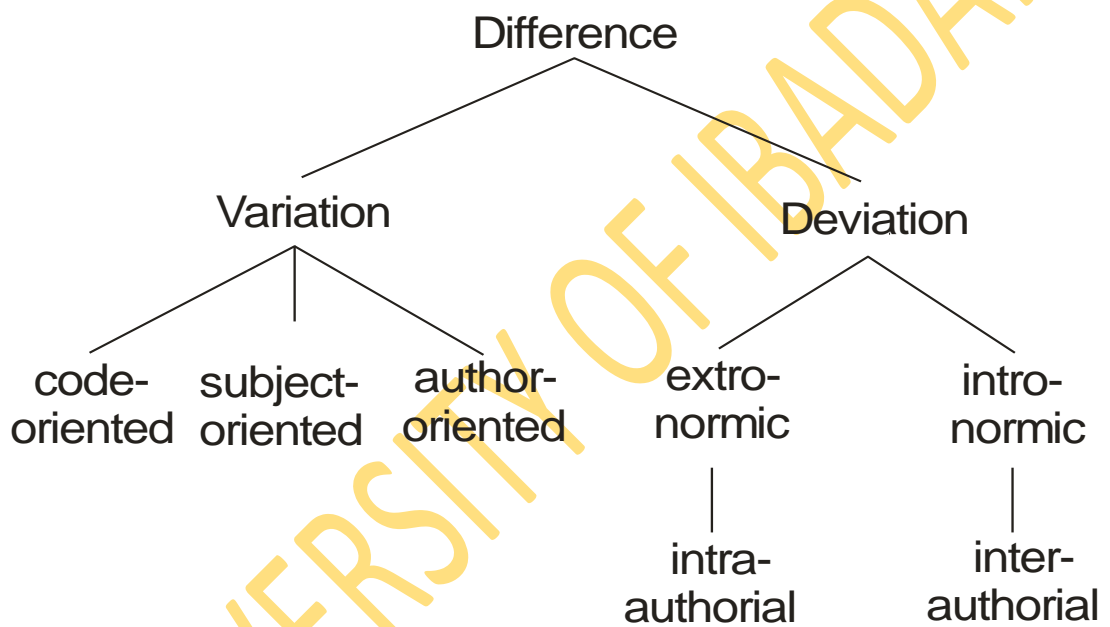
This is one of the most popular approaches to the study of style, which can be utilised in almost any form of language use as in the present study. It is anchored on the simple notion that language users select from the linguistic possibilities in their repertoire, the most appropriate item that will suit their message, medium and situation (Lawal, 2003: 28). This view, on the one hand, gives the language user a central position in choice-making either *by* him/herself or made *for* him/her, and on the other hand, presupposes the fact that there is a dichotomy between stylistic and non-stylistic choices (2003). The characterisation of the choice the language user has in expressing him/herself brings to mind the meaning potential, or what Halliday (1994) terms "network of options", which is embedded in a particular language system.

Osundare (2003) further highlights "pre-verbal choice" and "verbal choice" as two complementary forms of this concept. He explains that while pre-verbal choice is "speculative" and made before the verbal choice, verbal choice is the visible choice that is made at last. The problem with this view of style is that it is centred on words (or within the morphological or lexical levels), but stylistic choice can be made across all the levels of language (as Babajide, 2000 points out), even to a pragmatic level.

#### **2.2.2.1.2 Style as difference**

The term 'difference' is used to cover the concepts of "variation" and "deviation" as the schema below illustrates:

**Figure 2.2.1: Style as difference**



(Osundare, 2003[1982]: 18)

### 2.2.2.1.2.1 Variation

It is generally accepted nowadays by linguists of all theoretical persuasions that there is, in reality, no such thing as a homogeneous, stylistically and socio-expressively undifferentiated language system. (Lyons, 1995: 340)

This implies that variation is one of the major characteristic features of language, considering its (language's) heterogeneous nature. It proves "the status of language as a tool which owes its utility and survival to its variability" (Osunadre, 2003: 19). Three types of variation are identified, namely, code-oriented, subject-oriented, and author-oriented, all of which are relevant concepts – as our analysis will show.

Code-oriented variation is shaped from the view of style as the difference between two ways of saying the same thing, with respect to the situation of saying it. This view is appreciated better in institutionalised contexts where certain terms may be used in a way different from the ordinary. Code-oriented variation may manifest at the lexical, syntactic, or rhetorical levels of language in the communicative process. In subject-oriented variation, the degree of familiarity with the subject-matter between each text-producer and the audience is expressed through the choice of words, which has very precise, technical meanings regarding particular issues (Eggins and Martin, 1997: 233). Variations based on code and subject are significant in stylistics, especially in considering newspaper texts, because they help in the classification of specialised linguistic features associated with the texts. This corroborates Fakuade, (1998: 20) observation that code-oriented and subject-oriented variations result in register.

Author-oriented variation relates to the concept of style as individuality, which in turn, is similar to some other approaches that have been found in the literature, such as, *'le style est l'homme meme'* ("style is the man himself") (Buffon, 1953), style as idiolect (Gregory, 1964), style as idiosyncratic and constant forms (Lawal, 2003), etc. This perspective of style hinges on the belief that a writer's idiosyncratic way of expressing him/herself is a projection of his/her personality. This clearly takes for granted the fact that every language user has a "linguistic thumbprint" or signature, which is a set of linguistic features peculiar to that language user or group of stylistically related language users (Olaniyan and Oyekola, 2007: 30). However, if taken to the extreme, the style-as-personality view may conflict with the possibility of a language offering the same unifying choices to different writers of the same period

and genre, etc. of writing. This is partly why different writers may have similar styles; for example, Munonye and Amadi have been called the sons of Achebe considering their common simple, free-flowing style of writing.

#### **2.2.2.1.2.2 Deviation**

The deviationist perspective, as propagated in generative stylistics, measures the writer's style in relation to the choices made in violation or "de-automatisation" of the intuitive rules of language at the graphological, phonological/phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels without loss of meaning (Odebunmi, 2007: 4). This conception of style will give us an insight into the marked nature of news language. This approach to the study of style has also been stretched (beyond the purely linguistic levels of poetic texts practised in generative stylistics) to accommodate the deviations made by a language user at the discursal level, with regard to the functions of language which prevail in the given discourse (see Odebunmi, 2007[Lawal, 2003: 30]). This idea demonstrates that a style in which the referential or informative function prevails (like that of journalese) differs considerably from that in which the expressive and connotative function (like that of a literary work) is dominant.

This brings us to the usual problems associated with this approach: (a) what constitutes the norm? (b) which norm is to be used as criterion? (c) if style is seen as deviation from the norm, does it then mean that a text without deviation lacks style; especially when style is popularly investigated on the basis of significant or *prominent* features in a text? (Oha, 1994). Definitely, the norms that apply in news discourse may not apply in literature, nor will those of conversational style apply in the sports commentary. In this regard, Osundare argues that deviations may have norm-breaking (extro-normic) as well as norm-making (intro-normic) linguistic features (2003: 28). Furthermore, he explains, these features may also either be "intra-authorial" (i.e. syntagmatic) when "the author breaks the rules of his own norm, or "inter-authorial" (i.e. paradigmatic) if the author breaks the rules he shares with others in his field. This is close to what McMenamin (1993: 126) respectively refers to as "deviation within a norm and deviation from norm."

### 2.2.2.1.3 Style as Iteration

This perspective views style as the cumulative impact of the reverberations and resonances of linguistic (and extra-linguistic) features. It views linguistic elements of a text as existing not in isolation but in disciplined company; each element recalling, repeating, and reiterating the other with the result that a well executed text becomes a skilful pattern of echoes. (Osundare, 2003: 29)

Malmkar and Carter (2002, quoted in Olaniyan and Oyekola, 2007: 30), also share this idea of style as consistency, agreeing that a good style is “a consistent occurrence in the text of certain items and structures, or types of items and structures among those offered by the language as a whole”. In this “constant form” school, style is seen as a set of recurrent linguistic habits by which an author’s style can be predicted. Reconstructing a set of linguistic habits back to an author’s style can also be related to an area Lawal (1997: 33) calls ‘Forensic Stylistics’, which involves the use of linguistic techniques to investigate crimes in which language data constitute part of the evidence (cf. McMEnamin, 1993). This frequent linguistic habit in an author, according to Osundare (2003: 30), can manifest in phonological, syntactic and rhetorical forms, which can be quantified in frequencies. This approach has notably taken modern stylistics (or stylostistics) farther away from unquantified and impressionistic description of style.

All the views of style reviewed so far, some of which are contradictory and others complementary, all point to one common fact, namely, the term “style” is a multilateral concept. This multiple view of style is necessary, not only for the broad perspective it provides for analysis of our newspaper texts, but also for the characteristics given to stylistics as an aspect of linguistics that is multidisciplinary.

### 2.2.2.2 Stylistics: a brief historical development

Style in language (the consistent appearance of certain structures, items and elements in a speech or written text) can be said to be the major concern of stylistics today, but in historical terms, the field started with the study of Rhetoric, Poetics and Dialectics. Rhetoric (for the Greek *techne rhetorike*, and “orator” as *rhetor*), particularly in classical Greece, was seen mainly as an art of creating persuasive and attractive speeches (Alo, 2003: 2) recognised as a practical use of language in political and judicial speeches, and was taught as one of the main subjects in schools. The Greek scholar, Homer, was regarded as the father of rhetoric, and great sophist (a

teacher of rhetoric). Other language activities were Poetics and Dialectics. While Poetics was the study and creation of poetic works, and “focused on the problem of expressing the ideas before the actual moment of utterance” (Aristotle’s (384-322) *Poetics* considered a pioneer publication in this area), Dialectics was “the study of creating and guiding a dialogue, talk or discussion, as well as the methods of persuasion” (Miššíková, 2003: 9). The subsequent developments of style and stylistics were anchored on the three language ventures mentioned above, from which Poetics deflected to form another field of study known today as Literary Criticism; while Rhetoric and Dialectics developed into Stylistics (see Miššíková, 2003).

The further contributions in ancient Rome, later, brought the distinction of two different styles in speech as those represented by the Analogists (championed by Caesar) and the Anomalists (by Cicero). While the analogists stressed the “regularity of system rules” aimed at creating “simple, clear and straightforward speeches”, the anomalists used unnatural syntactic patterns “aimed at the creation and development of...flowery language” (Miššíková, 2003: 10). However, the anomalist rhetoric of Cicero thrived, even throughout the middle ages, as a model way of public speaking. No doubt, aesthetically attractive speeches were popular because they enabled speakers to develop their individual styles.

In the new age, the tradition of Cicero on rhetoric, largely based on spoken language, would be overshadowed by the era of Romanticism, which came with the notion of ‘style’ as exclusively referring to the written form of language (from the Greek *stylus*, meaning ‘a carver, or an instrument for writing’). Other new theories of style also developed: Individualist, Emotionalist, Formalist, Generativist, Functionalist, etc. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a group of German linguists (e.g. B. Croce, K. Vossler and L. Spitzer) surfaced under the school of the New Idealists, with their approach individualistic or psychoanalytical because its main aim was “to search for individual peculiarities of language as element of expressing a psychological state of mind (in German *Seelische Meinung*)” (Miššíková, 2003: 11). Unfortunately, however, the German school does not have much more followers that are known.

The origin of the new era of Linguistic Stylistics is traced to the emotionalist conception of linguistics of the French School, spear-headed by Charles Bally, who worked under the tutelage of Ferdinand de Saussure – the father of modern linguistics.

Bally's conception of stylistics is said to be emotionally expressive, considering his view of it "as the study of the expressive recourses of a given language" (Osundare, 2003: 9). While Bally's expressive stylistics and Croce's individual stylistics flourished in France (and the other Romance countries) and Germany, respectively, a new linguistic and literary movement (dominated by the Prague Linguistic Circle) developed in Russia, which came to be known as Formalism. The Russian formalists introduced a new, highly focused and solid method of literary and linguistic analysis. In fact, the formal method used in linguistics was based on the analytical view of the *form* with total disregard for the *content* of the literary text (Carter, 1986: 8). The Prague School linguists, Mukarovsky in particular, also introduced two important notions: *foregrounding* and *de-automatisation*, as a means of identifying the linguistic features of literary style. In spite of the short existence of the Russian formalism, many of its ideas were modified and further elaborated, which later largely became part of Structuralism in Europe.

The excesses of the formalists, who were mostly specialists in language rather than literature, triggered a response from literary scholars, who felt that the "over-technicalisation of literary texts often arising from a dry and unimaginative linguistic analysis" (Osundare, 2003: 9), was a threat to literary aesthetics. This scuffle, in a way, is akin to another debate between the Organists/Monists and the Ornatists/Dualists (see Leech and Short, 1981; Osundare, 2003). While the organist theory of style holds that content (the meaning of a text) cannot be separated from form (the style) – just as *matter* from *manner*, respectively; the ornatist theory sees the possibility and desirability of separating them and treating each in its own terms, in any piece of work (see also Milic, 1971).

In the 1960s, the overpowering influence of N. Chomsky's mentalistic model emerged and with its emergence came the theory of intuitive stylistics. Thorne (1977, quoted in Oha, 1994: 65) argues that there is an order of language (a norm) within the linguistic competence of a writer. Generative stylistics introduced the concept of 'style as deviation from norm', with the claim that deviation "occurs at the surface structure as a violation of the rules intuitively known and established in the grammar of the language" (Oha, 1994: 66). Elsewhere in Cambridge, Great Britain, the school known as The New Criticism came up, with I.A. Richards and W. Empson, as its core representatives. They introduced new terms (*tenor* and *vehicle*, which are still in use)

in the study of metaphor, with a method of structural analysis called *close reading*. But this approach soon became overshadowed by M.A.K. Halliday's (in the 1960s) pluralist approach to the linguistic analysis of literary texts. Halliday propagated the semiotic tradition, which recognises the interdependency of style, meaning and context; this text-context bridge is one of such that the formalists and generativists could not build. In fact, by the 1970s, Hallidayan linguistics became influential in studying larger structures of texts and network of relations within which they circulate. Its concepts of *register* (*field, tenor and mode*), *genre* and *choice*, some of which have been reviewed above under Halliday's Model of Context, are also valid to date in modern stylistics (see Halliday, 1978; 1994; Halliday and Mathiessen, 2004).

From the historical review above, defining stylistics becomes a difficult task because of the many contentious issues that have emanated from the field. These issues can be categorised into two: a) whether stylistics is a linguistic discipline or a method for literary criticism and text appreciation; and b) whether it is objective or subjective in interpretations. In spite of this chequered development, stylistics has not disappeared from the map of language and literary studies. Therefore, to properly position the course of the present study, the issues will be reviewed in sequence along with the definitions and positions of scholars in the field.

In Verdonk's *Stylistics*, stylistics is "the study of style, which can be defined as the analysis of distinctive expressions in language and the description of its purpose and effect" (2002: 4), while in Simpson's *Stylistics* it is "a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*" (2004: 3). What these definitions and many others in the literature have in common is their use of such terms as "description" and "interpretation", which establish the perspective of the definitions in terms of what Fish (1980: 13) regards as "the problem of clarifying the relationship between linguistic description and literary interpretation". This, in Akinbiyi's (2007: 221) view, "has generated such distinctive terms as "linguistic stylistics" and "literary stylistics". Hence, for Enkvist (1973: 27), stylistics can be viewed from three perspectives, each of which has its own merits. First, stylistics as "subdepartment of literary study when it draws only occasionally on linguistic methods", which is similar to what Akinbiyi (2007) calls "literary stylistics". Here, literary criticism gives it the goal of analysing the formal features of literary texts and relating their literary effects to linguistic causes where relevant; intuitions and



interpretative skills are important to literary criticism. Second, stylistics can be viewed as a “subdepartment of linguistics when dealing with the peculiarities of literary texts” (Enkvist, 1973: 27) and non-literary varieties of language (or registers). This relates to Akinbiyi’s “linguistic stylistics”. Finally, stylistics can be regarded as an “autonomous discipline when it draws freely, and eclectically, on methods from both linguistics and literary study” (Enkvist, 1973: 27). This may be related to Osundare’s (2003) idea of stylistics as a ‘peace-keeping’ interdisciplinary interface between linguistics and literature.

On the second issue of objectivity/subjectivity, Thornborrow and Wareing (1998: 4) identifies two key aspects of stylistics in their definition; namely, the use of linguistics to approach the aesthetic properties literary texts; and the discussion of texts according to objective criteria rather than according to purely subjective and impressionistic values. This runs contrary to Leech’s (1969) idea, which sees stylistics “as purely the interpretation of the personal message of literature”. However, as Thornborrow and Wareing point out, “By concentrating on the language of the text, and accepted linguistic methods of categorising and interpreting, it was argued that stylistics did not reflect the views of the individual critic, but an impersonal, reproducible ‘truth’” (Thornborrow and Wareing, 1998: 5). Anyone approaching the text and conducting the same stylistic procedure ought to arrive at the same results. Wales’ (2001) definition corroborates this, by saying that “Stylistics is only ‘objective’ (and the scare quotes are significant) in the sense of being methodical, systematic, empirical, analytical, coherent, accessible, retrievable and consensual.” Consequently, stylistics was intended to provide a less intuitive, less personalized method of analysis, and one which was deliberately based upon the scientific discipline of linguistics in order to generate the necessary observable and replicable categories of description.

From the foregoing, stylistics can be defined as a branch of linguistics which applies the theories and methods of modern linguistics in the study of language use in different domains and modes of text. The different styles (i.e. the consistent appearance of certain linguistic items, structures, and patterns) that are present in either a given utterance or a written text are one of the major concerns of stylistics. This view of stylistics accommodates the style of non-literary language like that of newspaper texts. Stylistics, therefore, allows the analyst “to bring such scientific characteristics of

language study as systematicity, objectivity and verifiability into the analysis [of the texts]” (Enkvist, 1973: 28).

### **2.2.2.3 Manifestations of stylistics**

The history and practice of stylistics have given it a broad scope which draws on the terminology and methodology provided by whichever aspects of linguistics that are observed to be relevant to its analysis (Bradford, 1997). As a result of this broad scope and approach, scholars (e.g. Enkvist, 1981; Zyngier, 1994; Beaugrande, 1996; Sandig and Selting, 1997, etc) have discussed different manifestations of stylistics. The existing views on the manifestations of stylistics can be comprehensively grouped into the following three headings: text-oriented stylistics, context-oriented stylistics, and applied stylistics.

#### **2.2.2.3.1 Text-oriented stylistics**

This approach to stylistics focuses purely on the text; that is, its analytical procedure is text-based, with emphasis on the structure of language. It includes; formalist stylistics, mentalist stylistics, and text-linguistic stylistics.

##### **2.2.2.3.1.1 Formalist stylistics**

Formalist stylistics is related to Jakobson’s (1961) ‘structural stylistics’ or what Sandig and Selting (1997) call ‘traditional stylistics’. Zyngier (2001) substitutes formal stylistics for what is generally called ‘linguistic stylistics’ “...because if, as Halliday (1967) points out, stylistics is the linguistic study of literary texts, then calling it “linguistic” would be a tautology” (Zyngier, 2001: 369). As an offshoot of Russian Formalism, this approach became more popular as a number of analysts from the tradition of Practical Criticism resorted to aspects of linguistics in search of systematicity and objectivity that Practical Criticism did not offer. Their strategy was to “concentrate on the text as an object and their main interests remained on the formalistic and mechanical description of patterns in phonology, lexis, and syntax at sentence level” (Zyngier, 2001: 369). It is this way of dealing with texts that has, more than other issues, always attracted criticism to stylistics. More recently, Mackay (1996, 1999) has resumed Fish’s (1980) criticism on this particular point: i.e. aside providing interesting insights into the lists of features and in statistical accounts, the formalist orientation disrespects the way text functions in context. From another dimension,

Thorne (1981[1970]) criticises structural linguistics, and hence linguistic stylistics, for unduly concentrating on what is observable (i.e. “surface structure”); he rather asserts that stylistic judgements belong to the area of “deep structure”.

#### **2.2.2.3.1.2 Mentalist stylistics**

This approach is related to Thorne’s (1981) ‘generative stylistics’ because it follows Chomskyan transformational-generative grammar which influenced linguistic practice in the 1960s. Thorne’s (1981) article “Generative Grammar and Stylistic Analysis” is a seminal work on mentalist stylistics, which is concerned with grammaticality and acceptability of forms. These notions imply a pre-existing norm. Here, the definition of stylistics is equated based on the assessment of the manifestations of linguistic competence in texts. Hence, Mentalist stylisticians value the relation of language to mind. Thorne proposes that a grammatical model be developed for poetry, for example, with an investigation of how its surface and deep structures relate (Zyngier, 2001: 370). According to him, “...the basic postulates of both studies (generative grammar explicitly, traditional stylistics implicitly) are mentalistic” (Thorne, 1981: 44). This approach of relating language use in poetry to the mind has been criticised by Toolan (1990: 2) as being too narrow. Cook (1992: 71) also sees the metaphorical use of ‘deep/surface’ as rather pejorative: “surface is associated to “trivial, false and empty-headed”, whereas deep is “serious, genuine and thoughtful” (Zyngier, 2001: 371).

#### **2.2.2.3.1.3 Text-linguistic stylistics**

A handful of scholars (e.g. Enkvist, 1981; Beaugrande, 1996; Sandig and Selting, 1997; Zyngier, 2001) have discussed text-linguistic stylistics as concerned with the particular aspects of texts (such as, choice of words, sentence structures and connectives) to reveal properties of different text types. Also interested in the form, but differed from formalist stylistics, it sees the text as a unit, not as a string of sentences ((Zyngier, 2001). By placing their work on the level of discourse, text-linguists thus equate the term ‘discourse’ to ‘text’. Text stylisticians, therefore, attempt reconnecting the examined text with the discourse participants’ knowledge of the world and society (Beaugrande, 1996). They developed the concept of textuality as “a human achievement in making connections wherever communicative events occur”. As subdivisions to textuality, text stylisticians discuss not only the make-up of words as

functional cohesion, concepts relations as functional coherence, but they also engage in the discursive newness of the text content or informativity, situationality and intertextuality (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). The methodology and analytical procedure of text-linguistic stylistics have, however, been criticised for being no different from their formal linguistics fathers (Hoey, 1983). The text-linguistic as well as the formalist approaches are, however, relevant to the present study.

### **2.2.2.3.2 Context-oriented stylistics**

Both the theory and method of practice here are context-driven; that is, certain contextual categories are utilised in the analysis of language use in texts. Some examples of context-oriented stylistics include: pragmatic stylistics, radical stylistics, functional stylistics and sociolinguistic stylistics.

#### **2.2.2.3.2.1 Pragmatic stylistics**

Pragmatic stylistics or pragma-stylistics, also known as ‘speech act stylistics’ has been recognised by Sandig and Selting (1997) and Zyngier (2001). It applies propositions of the Speech Act Theory put forward by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), and pragmatic principles proposed by Grice (1975), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1987) to literary and non-literary texts. Fowler explains that: “At a more ‘superficial’ end of linguistics, illocutionary or pragmatic theory” leads us to study “explicitly *manipulative* constructions such as imperatives, interrogatives, responses, etc. “At a more abstract level, implicature, presupposition, and other assumptions...are highly promising for literary theory and analysis” (Fowler, 1979: 15). This approach privileges communicative behaviour, where everyday conversation is seen as a means to understand discourse. Generally, the pragmatic theories “provide [the] stylisticians with tools to analyse, contextualize, compare, contrast and comment on texts basing their investigation on pragma-linguistic forms and socio-pragmatic functions of various linguistic elements (Zyngier, 2001: 371).

#### **2.2.2.3.2.2 Radical stylistics**

Burton’s (1982) radical stylistics has things in common with Birch’s (1989) ‘new stylistics’, Weber’s (1992) ‘critical discourse stylistics’ and Jeffries’ (2010) ‘critical stylistics’ (the model is discussed in detail under Theoretical Framework). The distinctive element they have with other approaches is the analyst’s search for the

ideological imprint of the text. Like pragmatic stylistics, the ideologically-oriented approach transcends the text level into the social, political, and historical elements which influence its production and reception. Burton's argues that texts are subject to value-judgement because they depend on socio-cultural and political determinants (Graff, 1990). Hence, "... an understanding of the social, historical and ideological dimensions of discourse can contribute a great deal to the interests of aesthetics" (Pratt, 1989: 21). Therefore, looking at the relationship between cultural studies and literature in particular, Birch (1989: 167) states that stylistics is "a study not just of structures of language and texts, but of the people and institutions that shape the various ways language means."

#### **2.2.2.3.2.3 Functional stylistics**

Functional stylistics was founded on the basic principles of the British school of functional linguistics established by M.A.K. Halliday. This school of linguistics describes language as a system of meanings and grammar as a resource for making meaning in social contexts (see Halliday, 1994). Functional descriptions of language were derived from observation and analysis of what people do through language within frameworks derived from linguistics. A functional approach to stylistic analysis interprets text as "interaction of multiple principles in all aspects of the organization of language (Beaugrande, 1997: 198). Functional stylistics accommodates both spoken and written text, the unit of which include clause, group, word or phoneme (Enkvist, 1986). Functional stylistics is still being practiced by stylisticians as linguistic functionalism with other contemporary ideas driven from philosophical, cultural and literary theories still lending potentialities for producing insightful descriptions of literary and non-literary texts. This interaction of linguistic functionalism with non-linguistic movements has produced what is arbitrarily referred to as 'reflective stylistics'.

#### **2.2.2.3.2.4 Sociolinguistic stylistics**

This approach to the practice of stylistics is sometimes related to 'discourse stylistics'. Roger Fowler proposes sociolinguistic framework for the study of literary style: "The literary style can be interpreted in relation to the stylistic conventions which generate it and the historical and sociological situation which brought it into existence" (Fowler, 1981: 42). Fowler believes that the manner and habits of the world

and their ideological and sociological registers spread through the literary text and influence the way the reader understands of the stylistic character of the text. Bakhtin's concept of 'dialogism' explains this relationship thus: "there is a competitive dialogue between the various styles in the text, supplemented by the text's attempt to alter and reshape the discourses it has borrowed from the non-fictional world" (1986: 54). Sociolinguistic, unlike text-oriented stylistics, seeks to find social and ideological context functioning behind and developing stylistic character of a literary text. In this section, the four (pragmatic, radical, functional and sociolinguistic) context-oriented approaches are relevant to the present study for the reason that they allow it to adequately pay attention to certain issues and contexts in the ND conflict discourse which influence the lexico-stylistic choices in the newspaper reports.

#### **2.2.2.3.3 Applied stylistics**

Stylistics has been considered "a developing and controversial field of study" (Crystal and Davy, 1969: vii); but in the early twenty-first century, it has not only made positive impact within its field, it has also created far-reaching collaboration with other disciplines. Modern stylistics has continually flourished, as witnessed in "a proliferation of sub-disciplines where stylistic methods are enriched and enabled by theories of discourse, culture and society" (Simpson, 2004: 2). Some of the notably established areas that stylistics has been applied are discussed in the following topics: cognitive stylistics, feminist stylistics, corpus stylistics, pedagogical stylistics and forensic stylistics.

##### **2.2.2.3.3.1 Cognitive stylistics**

Cognitive stylistics is a new sub-discipline of stylistics traceable to the work by Semino and Culpeper (2002), with Peter Stockwell, Salvatore Attardo, Catherine Emmotte, Donald Freeman, Craig Hamilton, and others. Subscribing to the explicit, detailed and rigorous framework of stylistic analysis, scholars working in cognitive science extend the boundaries of linguistic analysis of text by articulating different theories such as schema theory, cognitive metaphor theory, conceptual metaphor theory, text world theory, blendings, mental space theories, etc (Hamilton, 2002: 2). These theories provide frameworks for the analysis of literary and non-literary texts, also focusing on reading and cognition. The synthesis of cognitive approaches to literature, for example, allows for new ways of reading traditional literary texts, as well

as postmodernist, and post structuralist texts. Cognitive stylistics is particularly relevant to this study considering its relation with the conceptual metaphor theory, socio-cognitive model of CDA, and critical stylistics, which are integral parts of the theoretical framework.

#### **2.2.2.3.3.2 Feminist stylistics**

Feminist stylistics is credited principally to the recent works by Mills (1995), with Deirdre Burton, John Haynes and the critical intervention of Virginia Woolf as well as the French feminists such as Jacques Lacan, Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray. It argues that there is a male hegemony in both the treatment of women in society and their characterization in literary works; and therefore seeks to formulate an authentic counter-image of women through their writings (Ufot, 2012: 2462). The purpose of this approach to stylistics is to systematically explore the ways in which literature distinctly expresses a female consciousness (Haynes, 1989: 34), in the process of which literary art is treated essentially as a medium for the foregrounding of female experiences and the destruction of male stereotypes about women. This approach to stylistics extends over a broad range of issues and skills in textual analysis with the feminist ethos as its underpinning ideology (Ufot, 2012: 2463). The goal of this approach to stylistic study is the evolution of linguistics and social change.

#### **2.2.2.3.3.3 Corpus stylistics**

Corpus stylistics, the method of which is sometimes associated with 'quantitative stylistics' or 'statistical stylistics / stylo-statistics', is the analysis of texts by using corpus linguistic techniques. It combines the analytic techniques of corpus linguistics with the goals of stylistics, that is, it extracts meanings from texts by using computational means of analysis. In recent years, corpus stylistics has become an integral part of corpus linguistics. Some notable studies in this area include: Louw (1993), Semino and Short (2004), Stubbs (2005), Hoey (2005), Starcke (2006), Wynne (2006), Mahlberg (2007), etc. Among the important areas of current activity, at least three different approaches can be discerned; namely, corpus annotation and the analyses of deviation from norms, and collocation. Corpus annotation involves investigating particular linguistic features by making a sample or complete collection of the texts to be studied in electronic form and conducting a thorough and exhaustive analysis of the features as they occur in the corpus. The results of the analysis are

usually attached to the electronic text as tags, or annotations (Mahlberg, 2007). A second approach which makes use of a corpus for stylistic research is to study literary effects in texts by looking for the evidence of language norms in a reference corpus. These effects can often be described as deviations from the norms of language use. Computational techniques have shown patterns of co-occurrence of lexical items (collocations) and grammatical forms (colligations). The application of the concepts of collocation, colligation and semantic prosody have also been developed by Michael Hoey, whose theory of *lexical priming* adds a cognitive dimension, which can be used to account for creativity in language (Hoey, 2005).

#### **2.2.2.3.3.4 Forensic stylistics**

Forensic or forensics, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, relates to the application of scientific techniques in the investigation of crime. Forensic stylistics, therefore, "is the application of the science of linguistic stylistics to forensic contexts" (McMenamin (2002: 178). The primary locus of investigation in forensic stylistics is written text, and sometimes, spoken language (e.g., transcripts of tape recorded conversations, depositions, speeches, interviews, etc) can be represented in writing. The primary motivation of forensic stylistics is in the area of questioned authorship. Here, stylistic analysis is used "to reach a conclusion and opinion related to the authorship of a questioned writing within the context of litigation" (McMenamin, 2002: 179). Other regular applications, however, relate to the analysis of meaning in documents such as wills, insurance policies, contracts, agreements, laws, and the analysis of meaning in spoken discourse.

#### **2.2.2.3.3.5 Pedagogical stylistics**

Pedagogical stylistics is sometimes called 'empirical stylistics' or even used together as 'empirical pedagogical stylistics'. The emphasis on exploring some of the underlying issues and concerns relevant to using literature in the language classroom has become one of the newest trends in teaching English as a foreign language. Pedagogical stylistics focuses on literature where the message is text-contained and presupposes no wider context so that everything necessary for its interpretation is to be found within the message itself (Weber, 1992: 2). Pedagogical reasons "rationalise the inclusion of practical stylistics within applied linguistics seen as an area of enquiry which applies the findings of linguistics to the empirical problems of teaching"



(Ononye, 2013: 217). The problem with literary text is not complex because one can concentrate on the text itself without worrying about distracting social appendages. In this section, aspects of pedagogical, corpus and cognitive stylistics are relevant to the present study considering the quantitative and socio-cognitive dimensions taken in the analysis of the data.

## **2.3 Theoretical framework**

In this section, the core theories adopted for the analysis of our data are reviewed. These are discussed in the following order: critical stylistics (Jeffries' model), critical discourse analysis (van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of context), evaluative (lexical) semantics and conceptual metaphor.

### **2.3.1 Critical stylistics (CS)**

Considering the utmost importance of textual and systematic analysis to the present study, which CDA approaches (as we demonstrate below) do not fully provide, it becomes necessary to consider other critical studies of language, such as CS. This somewhat corroborates Blommaert and Bulcaen's (2000) observation that:

[There is] a new critical paradigm now observable in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and other fields. There is now far more critical research than that developing under the heading of CDA alone, and one of the surprising features in CDA literature is the scarcity of references to this plethora of work. (2000: 456)

CS is one of the offshoots of the new critical paradigm. It is a developing new area of applied stylistics, which can enter into a productive complementarity with other critical approaches. CS aims to "introduce readers to a procedure of vigilance which trains them in critical *reading*" (Weber, 1992: 1; emphasis in original). Birch (1989: 31) adds credence to this, stating that the aim of a politically aware and responsible stylistics is to change the linguistically constructed realities by removing "classist, sexist and racist injustices in the world." Within the same critical paradigm, critical-stylistic locus of investigation is the text (both literary and non-literary) and the framework, like CDA, is multidisciplinary. In this way, it encompasses any aspects of pragmatics, functional theories of language, cognitive psychology, *inter alia* as are found useful in bringing out what a particular text is 'doing'. CS is not entirely new in the literature on critical language study; it can also almost be said to be related to or

evolved from ‘radical stylistics’ (see Burton, 1982) or ‘critical discourse stylistics’ (Weber, 1992) or ‘critical stylistics’ (Jeffries, 2010), with its focus essentially upon largely implicit and/or highly ideological background of text.

CS and CDA are related but differ in many respects, which are, first, hinged on the essential differences between stylistics and discourse analysis, through which the differences in their ‘critical’ perspectives could be understood. One major difference between the two fields is the use of linguistic analysis. According to Ike (2002: 5), stylistics is largely text-oriented; it maintains standard linguistic analysis (of the language forms of the text) through the levels of language while discourse analysis incorporates context and other textual features beyond linguistics. The dependency of stylistics on linguistics, therefore, influences the methods employed in CS, with the primacy of linguistic analysis, but which may be revitalised “by importing ideas from psychoanalysis, structuralism and deconstruction” (Simpson, 1993: 3), in order to establish *what* a text (and hence its producer) is doing and *how* it is doing what.

Similarly, the reliance on the ‘science’ of linguistics constrains CS focus on providing an objective methodology and linguistic framework to textual analysis. This unique approach of CS, according to Weber (1992):

...is thus NOT that of making the analysis more objective by providing pseudo-scientific means of discovering the hidden meaning of the text, BUT that of making one’s own procedures of analysis and interpretation explicit. This...points to an important *pedagogical* advantage of stylistics. [Critical] stylistics, on the other hand, provides us with a critical metalanguage which can be taught and learnt; it can thus help students to formulate their intuitive reactions to a text in an explicit, and more easily “replicable”, way. And it is herein that its value lies. (Weber, 1992: 12; emphasis in original)

CS, therefore, supplies tools for reading which are systematic and hence replicable. In fact, the first pedagogical aim of CS lies in its “systematicity, replicability, intersubjective verifiability;” these also point to a second related aim: “the *critical* or *emancipatory* aim” (Weber, 1992: 13; emphasis in original), which can ultimately lead to social change, since it unlocks the prospects of alternative construction of reality. CS may also be seen as enriched beyond the traditional stylistics’ focus on literary texts and modern stylistics’ accommodation of non-literary texts reviewed above. In Burton’s (1982) words, CS:

... makes an epistemological break with the formalist and structuralist framework of traditional stylistics: it only relies on different tools of analysis, but also concerns itself with a different domain of analysis and tries to achieve very different aims. Unlike structuralist stylistics, which focuses upon the foregrounded ... structures of ... text, [this] stylistics focuses upon largely implicit and highly ideological “background” of the text. It deals with the ideological undercurrents of all discourse. This new domain of analysis obviously requires very different formal tools of analysis drawn from functional theories of language, from pragmatics and discourse analysis, and from cognitive science and artificial intelligence. (Burton, 1982: 1)

From this argument, two motivating theoretical questions for CS may be condensed to include the following:

1. how can the background ideologies, which inform the styles in a text, be reconstructed?
2. how systematically can the linguistic choices and strategies, which realise the styles, be identified?

As earlier highlighted, a considerable measure of research has been done – predominantly with CDA, generally in exploring the relationship between language and power, or primarily concerned with the socio-political contexts in which texts are produced and read, or the contexts in which language choices in the texts are made. The bulk of these studies have largely been less concerned with providing a reasonably broad range of tools which would help explain how the text is created and positioned to adjust the reader’s ideological attitude to match that of the text. It is in this regard that Jeffries’ (2010) critical stylistic tools become relevant to this study.

### **2.3.1.1 Jeffries’ critical stylistics model**

In line with the questions raised above, Jeffries (2010) proposes 10 analytical tools to approach texts critically, which, when compared with earlier literature on critical language studies, offer clearer methods of establishing *what the text is doing*. The set of tools suggested by Jeffries includes: 1. naming and describing; 2. representing actions/event/states; 3. equating and contrasting; 4. exemplifying and enumerating; 5. prioritising; 6. assuming and implying; 7. negating; 8. hypothesising; 9. presenting the speech and thoughts of other participants; and 10. representing time, space and society (see Jeffries, 2010 for detail).

According to Jeffries (2010), in order to systematically answer the question of what any text (literary or non-literary) is ‘doing’ in a textual analysis, these tools function together; and at another level, “cover not only the ground suggested by Fairclough [1989, 1995a, b], Fowler [1991, 1996], Simpson [1993] and others but also include new tools which seem...to work...in a similar way to the more traditional tools such as transitivity and modality” (Jeffries, 2010: 15). Also importantly, the tools are enabled by a means of textual analysis, which can illuminate the stylistic strategies that a text producer has used (whether conscious or not) and help the reader discover the ideological content. Thus, out of the 10 critical-stylistic tools proposed by Jeffries (2010), the four related to the lexical choices found in our data are reviewed. They are naming and describing, equating and contrasting, hypothesising, and viewing actions and events.

The concept of naming and describing in ideological terms tasks the analyst’s knowledge of the structure of the English noun group or nominal group. Many stylistic uses are observed where a choice of metaphor not only makes reference to something, but also shows the text producer’s opinion or assessment of the referent. The strategy is, therefore, concerned with the part of the sentence that typically ‘names’ an entity. This is for the reason that the chief ideological importance of noun groups is that “they are able to ‘package up’ ideas or information which are not fundamentally about entities but which are really a description of process, event or action” (Jeffries, 2010: 19). The linguistic model of naming covers a number of linguistic practices and their ideological effects. They include: the choice of a metaphor to indicate a referent, and the construction of a noun group with modifiers to further determine the nature of the referent. Choice of metaphor with “pejorative or ameliorative connotation” in texts always has more obvious potential.

Referents are also named and described through the modification of the nominal component, which “does not form the *proposition* of the clause ... but instead labels something that is thus assumed (technically, *supposed*) to exist” (Jeffries, 2010: 21; emphasis original). Much as ideological the choice of metaphor can be, normally, the nominal part of English clauses may use syntactic and morphological techniques to name referents and produce ideological effects. This, in Fowler’s (1991: 79) view, makes the ‘nominal’ part of English clauses less prone to dispute or questioning than other clausal elements, thereby ideologically ‘packaging up’ some information which

would not offer the reader the attitude to contest the relationships that are named by the nominal element in the clause.

The equating and contrasting tool explores how texts structure the world in terms of equivalence and opposition. According to Jeffries (2010: 52), texts have the power, and are always utilised, “to set up *new* synonymies and oppositions, sometimes between words that we would *never* relate to each other out of context, and sometimes between phrases and clauses, or even whole paragraphs.” There is a varied range of “syntactic triggers” which text producers employ to create these relationships, which, in turn, are relevant in conveying their (producers’) ideologies.

Jeffries’ (2010) linguistic model here, which draws on Davies (2007) and Jeffries (2007, 2009), includes three syntactic triggers of equivalence: noun group apposition (e.g. The Commissioner of Police, River state, Mr. Felix Ogbaudu...), parallel structures (e.g. the crises are dangerous, the crises are our youth’s future), and relational intensive transitivity choices (e.g. the worst problem they face **is** the disturbing activities of their youth), though he recognises other textual ways in which metaphors and similes are constructed to make conceptual equivalence. On the other hand, he identifies four syntactic triggers of contrasting: complementaries (e.g. lawful/criminal), gradable antonymy (e.g. marginalized/ideal), converses (e.g. them/us), and directional or reverse opposition (e.g. develop/destroy) (2010: 56-7).

The hypothesising strategy explores the contribution of modality to the ideology of texts by looking at the hypothetical situations that modality initiates. This is anchored on the premise that whatever is the text producer’s opinion about the truth or desirability of a process, “the envisaged situation or process itself is [still] somewhat hypothetical” (Jeffries, 2010: 114)). Modality is often represented as the ultimate pattern of the ‘interpersonal metafunction’ of language, which Halliday (1985) includes as one of the main functional systems in his language description. However, modality as conceived here draws on the modal model developed by Simpson (1993) and also on the semantic concept of connotation, which together can help us see in our data when the writer’s viewpoint – and not just a factual piece of information – is being encoded.

Modality is the conceptual tool for the analysis of the textual function of hypothesising being explored here. Therefore, the linguistic model of modality presented by Jeffries (2010) here utilises, apart from the unmarked forms of modal

auxiliary verb in English (e.g. will, should, may, could, must, etc), a range of other modal items in English which are however not auxiliary verbs. These include lexical verbs (e.g. think, wish, hope, etc), modal adverbs (e.g. probably, maybe, definitely, etc), modal adjectives (e.g. certain, obligatory, possible, etc), and conditional structures (e.g. if...then, etc), etc. The meanings of modal forms (both auxiliaries and other items) are divided into epistemic (expressing doubt and certainty) and boulomaic (expressing desire and obligation).

Viewing actions and events is another strategy that has to do with stereotypical ways the news reporters present the actions and events in the discourse, and their consequences as seen by the reader. According to Jeffries (2010: 37), the verbal element “is where the actions and process that take place between entities are typically represented.” Representing the verbal element, therefore, deals with strand of meaning that “stereotypically presents information on what is being done (actions), what is happening (events), or what simply is (states)” (2010: 38). He therefore puts forward a linguistic model of representing actions/events modified from Halliday’s transitivity system but related to Simpson’s (1993: chapter 4) version of the model. This transitivity model – depending on the kind of process or event it appears to be describing – allocates lexical verbs to four different categories; namely, material process, verbalisation process, relational process, and mental process (Jeffries, 2010: 40-6).

Material processes, which refer to “something that is done or happens,” include three kinds of material action, such as Intentional Material Action (IMA), Superventional Material Action (SMA), and Material Action Events (MAE). IMA involves material actions that are intentional performed by a conscious being (e.g. police **arrest** arms suppliers to militants); SMA includes unintentional actions by conscious beings (e.g. the father of kidnapped British girl **died**); while MAE refers to the use of verbs with an inorganic Actor, where human action is either missing or played down (e.g. stray bullets from the exchange of fire **caught** some of the natives). These three subsets of material process, according to Jeffries, “all have Actors and may also have Goals” (2010: 41).

Verbalisation processes “describe any action which uses language,” and because they have human agent, they seem to be related to material actions (Jeffries, 2010: 42). Although some of these verbs are more clearly verbal than others, they

largely involve the same potential set of participants: a Sayer (which is compulsory), some Verbiage (common but not always present), and a Target (less common but often possible). The Relational process “represents the static or stable relationships between Carriers and Attributes, rather than any changes or dynamic actions.” The verbs here include the copula – ‘to be – and other ‘Intensive’ relations (RI), Possessive relations as indicated by verbs like ‘have’ (RP), and ‘Circumstantial’ relations (RC) involving verbs of movement and the verb ‘be’ as well (Jeffries, 2010: 43). Mental processes usually “refer to what happens within human beings.” Mental processes identified include verbs of Mental Cognition (MC) such as ‘thinking,’ ‘knowing,’ ‘realising,’ etc; Mental Reaction (MR) such as ‘liking,’ ‘hating,’ etc; and Mental Perception (MP) such as ‘sensing,’ ‘hearing,’ ‘seeing,’ etc. The participants in a mental process are Senser and Phenomenon (cf. Halliday, 1985, 1994).

### **2.3.2 van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model of CDA**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), according to van Dijk (1998), is a field that is interested in studying and analysing written and spoken texts to expose the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these sources are (re)produced and maintained within specific social, political and historical contexts. In the same vein, Fairclough (1989) states that the foci of CDA are to systematically explore the relationships between discursive practices and texts, and investigate how such practices and texts arise out of ideologically shaped relations of power. Put in other words, CDA aims at making transparent the connections between societal structures, discourses and the ideas that inform them; connections that might be opaque to the layperson. Over the years CDA has been further developed and broadened. Among the scholars whose works have profoundly contributed to the development of CDA are van Dijk (1988, 1993, 1998a, 1998b, 2001), Wodak (1995, 1996, 1999), and Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1993, 1999).

van Dijk uses the term ‘CDA’ to describe his approach to language study, much of which, like the present study, involves the analysis of media texts. With the development of more sophisticated media technologies, the mass media has adopted a central focal point for society, hence its attractiveness to critical discourse analysts analysing power in society. The CDA approach preferred by van Dijk differs from CS in a number of ways as pointed out above, although their overall aims correspond

closely. To him, CDA is “the study and critique of social inequality”, by looking at “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk, 1993: 249). Dominance is seen as “the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality” (1993: 238-249).

van Dijk (1998) sees one task of CDA as making clear the nature of social power and dominance, which therefore presupposes the existence of relationships between different social groups. He argues that because ideologies have a socio-cognitive basis in individuals, they are produced by societies, and are therefore socially constructed and shared, and require discourse in order to be manifested and represented. Social power “is based on privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge” (van Dijk, 1993: 254). This influence is usually manifested by discourse, hence the application of CDA. van Dijk agrees with Fairclough by using the term ‘hegemony’ to describe these relationships, and discusses how dominance might be enacted by “everyday forms of text and talk” (van Dijk, 1993: 154). This is essentially another way of discussing Fairclough’s ‘orders of discourse’ and IDFs, as van Dijk’s everyday text and talk can be seen as examples of naturalised dominant institutional discourse.

### **2.3.2.1 van Dijk’s view of ideology**

The concept of ideology was coined by the late eighteenth century French philosopher, Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836). According to Nnoli (2003: 177), Destutt de Tracy used it to describe a new scientific discipline that systematically studies ideas, emotions and sensations – the science of ideas. This conception has since changed and ideology has come to embody the ideas themselves. As a result of the changes, ideology has been related to or found in all areas of social knowledge, rules and practice. It has also come to be presented as a subject representing two contradictory realities – the good and the bad, the former depicting ideology as “a system of thought that animates social or political action”, and the latter as a “misleading, illusory or one-sided criticism or condemnation” (Nnoli, 2003: 178-79).

Ideology is conceived here as a complex concept, with different implications depending on the context in which it is used. Broadly speaking, it refers to “a set of



*ideas* which produces a partial and selective view of reality” (Ryan, 1992: 114). In the social sciences (the social psychology and political science), ideologies are seen as belief systems or social representations of some kind (Farr and Moscovici, 1984; Fraser and Gasket, 1990). This means that they are not personal beliefs; they are not simply the creation of those who hold them (Omotola, 2009: 618). But rather, they are beliefs shared by groups, socio-culturally shared knowledge, group attitudes or norms and values. Indeed, ideologies form the *basis* of the belief systems or social representations of specific groups (see also Scarbrough, 1990). Thus, the notion of ideology entails widely held ideas or beliefs, which may often be seen as ‘common sense,’ legitimising or making widely acceptable certain forms of social inequality. Their purpose is to engender specific behaviours and provide a moral code by which one's actions can be judged. Indeed, it is difficult to envisage how a society could function without some sort of ideology. The media, news, educational institutions, religion, the family unit, and even art and culture, through processes of censorship, all play a part in upholding and propagating ideologies (Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield, 1994).

In van Dijk's (2005: 12) view, ideology is a special form of social cognition shared by social groups; meaning that it forms the basis of the social representations and practices of group members, including their discourse, which at the same time serves as the means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge. The structure of ideologies is based on both cognitive and social arguments, especially at the interface of cognition and society (see van Dijk, 1998). Thus, cognitively, ideologies are a form of self-schema of (the members of) groups, that is, a representation of themselves as a group, especially in relation to other groups. Processes of social identification ultimately take place on the shared social representations we call ideologies. The social inspiration for a theory of ideological structure therefore must be sought in the basic properties of (social) groupings, of which the following ones have particular relevance (cf. van Dijk, 2005: 14):

1. Membership devices (ethnic, minority, appearance, origin, etc.): Who *are* we?
2. Actions: What are we *doing*?
3. Aims: *Why* are we doing this?
4. Norms and Values: What is good or bad for us?
5. Position: What is our position in society, and how we relate to other groups?

6. Resources: What is ours? Do we control it? What do we want to have at all costs?

According to van Dijk (2005), these are some of the fundamental categories that define social groupings, and that also form the basic self-schema organising ideologies. In other words, the same fundamental schema organises group thought and group life, as may be expected from ideologies. Thus, ideologies may serve to establish or maintain social dominance, as well as to organise dissidence and opposition. Under specific conditions, they may serve to found and organise the social thoughts and practices of any social group.

Ideology can, therefore be defined as a cognitive structure for functioning in a society, by serving as a justificatory and explanatory model for analysing societal realities. If ideologies control the social representations of groups, they also control the knowledge acquired and shared by a group; namely, what van Dijk (2005: 15) calls “group knowledge.” These are the social beliefs which a group holds to be true, according to its own evaluation or verification (truth) criteria, as is in the case of ND activist groups (see chapter one). Of course, for other popular groups, such beliefs may be mere exaggerated opinions or false beliefs, and therefore cannot be called knowledge at all. Obviously, the power and prestige of each group will also carry over to the power and legitimacy of their beliefs and what beliefs count as knowledge in society at large. Evidently, this formulation suggests that there are beliefs that are generally shared in society, across (ideological) group boundaries. That is, by definition “this kind of *cultural knowledge* is non-ideological: there is no difference of opinion, no ideological struggle, no opposition in this case: these are the basic beliefs of a culture, on which all others, also the ideological beliefs of groups, are based”. To stress this general, cultural basis of these beliefs, we may also call them “Cultural Common Ground” (van Dijk, 2005: 15; see also Clark, 1996; Smith, 1982).

### **2.3.2.2 van Dijk’s model of context**

The major thesis of van Dijk’s ideas on text-context relation is that language users (both the news writer and reader, in this case) attend to issues in the discourse depending on their mental model of the communicative situation, which keeps track of what the language users find interesting or important to (for example) report (and even project in the front page or headlines) or read (and even get emotionally attached or

influenced). It is in these models that participants represent themselves, other participants and their relations to them, current time frames, location and direction, social actions going on, and so on (van Dijk, 2001: 19). It is, therefore, in this connection that van Dijk (1999) asserts that social situations cannot directly influence language use, but it is only possible through a cognitive interface, which spells out how social situations are constructed, and hence interpreted by participants.

Like most of van Dijk's theoretical models, context models, or what he simply refers to as "contexts" (van Dijk, 1999, 2001), are located in the mental representation of the communicative event and social situation as it constrains discourse. One remarkable value of van Dijk's model of context, which differentiates it from most other theories of context, is its view of contexts as "not 'out there', but 'in here' ... [as] mental constructs of participants; [as] individually variable interpretations of the ongoing social situation" (van Dijk, 2001: 18). What this means is that context is conceptualised in the mind, which allows discourse participants to adequately contribute to ongoing discourse; to produce and understand speech acts; to adapt topics, lexical items, style and rhetoric to the social event.

The context models, according to van Dijk, "are not static mental representations, but *dynamic* structures" (2001: 18). In his view, context is constructed and reconstructed in real-time by each participant in an event, and it changes with the continuous changes in the goings-on and interpretations of situations. These changes allows participants to update their mental models (what they know) about the situations or events. This particularly applies to the discourse of news reporting, where the newspaper writer knows particular things about the reader and their impressions about particular events (which influence the styles and strategies s/he employs in the production of news texts) being reported. In the same vein, the reader knows and is affected by the professional role of the media (and their reporters), which continually affects her/his consumption or interpretation of the events being reported. Hence, as Mey (2000: 39) corroborates, context include the conditions under which text production and consumption take place (cf. Maynard, 1996).

van Dijk (2001) proposes a list of categories for the organisation of context models as subjective representations of communicative events or situations, which he succinctly refers to as "structures of context" (2001: 21). They are: domain, setting, cognition, and participant roles. Domain includes both global and local actions, which

express the social actions going on in the discourse. Setting includes location, day and time of events. Cognition is defined in terms of the goals, knowledge and other beliefs of the participants. This category is the host of the semantic and pragmatic properties of discourse. Finally, participant roles relate to the various roles which affect the production and comprehension of discourse. Three roles are proposed by van Dijk (2001), namely, interactional role (accounts for various situational positions of participants), social role (accounts for the group membership of participants), and communicative role (accounts for the various production roles in institutional situations).

A great deal of the criticisms that have been levelled at CDA approaches and methodologies is shared in this study (see Widdowson, 1995, 1996; Blommaert, 2001; Meyer, 2001). These therefore make CDA not enough to handle our data on a large part, though specific aspects of it (as pointed out above) will be incorporated. The criticisms levelled at CDA, for example – that it bears an over-elaborate theorisation but lacks a unified methodology and adequate attention to context, which rub it of detailed textual analysis – are due to the noticeable fact that critical discourse analysts have concerned themselves less with generating a toolkit for doing CDA; a reliable theoretical model that would cater for most, if not all, of the issues raised by critics.

### **2.3.3 Evaluative semantics**

Evaluation, in Hunston and Thompson's (2000) view, is a cover term for the expression of the speaker/writer's attitude or stance towards, or viewpoint on, or feelings about the realities that s/he is commenting on. The attitude "may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values" (2000: 5). This way of structuring meaning in language use is particularly relevant to our analysis of ND conflict newspaper text, especially when language offers its users resources for positioning propositions in a semantic space, which can be either positive or negative to some specified degree. According to Lemke (1996), it is a characteristic of the semantics of evaluative attributes of propositions that they are bi-polar: for every positive attribute there is a complementary negative one.

The close kinship between the semantics of propositional evaluations is captured in Halliday's analysis of modality in the clause (Halliday, 1994: 355-363; see also Martin, 1995). For example, Halliday's lexicogrammatical abstraction for

realizing the semantic evaluations of probability in the clause is ‘epistemic’ modality, which is similar to what Lemke (1996: 13) bifurcates as ‘Warrantability’ and ‘Usuality’. Abstraction for obligation is captured with ‘deontic’ modality, while desirability is with ‘boulomatic’ modality; these are related to what Lemke’s (1996) refers to as ‘Normativity’ and ‘Desirability’, respectively. There are many lexicogrammatical ways to realize these semantic options, for example (see Halliday, 1994):

Fred must be coming. (Modal auxiliary)

Fred is certainly coming. (Modal adverb)

Certainly, Fred is coming. (Attitudinal disjunct)

It is certain that Fred is coming. (Evaluative epithet/Objective orientation)

I am certain that Fred is coming. (Evaluative epithet/Subjective orientation)

It is a certainty that Fred is coming. (Evaluative nominalization)

I know that Fred is coming. (Modal projection: mental process)

These variants are not completely synonymous in their total meaning potentials, of course, but they occupy the same relative positions in systems of semantic contrast for evaluative meaning (e.g. must be/may be, certainly/probably, certain/probable, certain/of the opinion, a certainty/a good possibility, know/think). Considering relativity of meaning potentials of these sort, Halliday (1994: 355) recognizes evaluative attributes of propositions as one of the “interpersonal grammatical metaphors” by which modality might alternatively be realized. Lexical semantics has generally made efforts in realising the meaning potentials of words by recognizing context-sensitivity (i.e. words can vary with different contexts) in the structure (i.e. words have lexical relationships).

### **2.3.3.1 Lexical relations**

One of the ways through which semantic evaluation can be facilitated is through lexical relations. The existence of semantic relations among words calls for several kinds of explanation about how referents are evaluated in texts. For instance, are these relations among words or among the things the words refer to? Are the relations arbitrary or rule based? language specific or universal? a product of linguistic

or general cognition? These questions will guide our review of theoretical views in this section with respect to establishing our model of evaluation through lexical relations.

There is no generally accepted theory of how the lexicon is internally structured and how lexical information is extra-linguistically represented. According to Murphy (2003: 3), the lexicon interfaces with the extra-linguistic elements, but there is little agreement in terms of what information is included on what side of the denotative-connotative boundary, how the information is represented, and even whether the boundary exists. Therefore, in studying the meaning-related properties of words, what is included in the field is likely to vary from scholar to scholar; this gives rise to the idea of sense relation. According to Cruse (2006: 163-4), there are two major ways of looking at sense relations. First, according to the viewpoint of structural semantics: the sense of a word is the sum total of its sense relations with other words in the language. Second, outside of structural semantics, sense relations are usually regarded as relations between senses (or other units of meaning). In this latter view, sense relations bifurcate into the Saussurean distinction between paradigmaticism and syntagmaticism. This view is however favoured in this study.

Paradigmatic sense relations commonly manifest in terms of synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and different kinds of opposition. Synonymy, according to Saeed (2004: 65), is the lexical relation involving different phonological words with similar meaning, which are derived from a number of parameters, *viz.* different dialects (e.g. *tap* and *faucet*), different registers (e.g. *wife* and *spouse*), collocational restriction (e.g. *boy* and *lad*), and portraying positive/negative attitude of the user (e.g. *activist* and *militant*). Hyponymy (derived from Greek: *hypo-* meaning ‘under’) is the lexical relation of class-inclusion described in English by the phrase ‘kind / type / sort of’. “A chain of hyponyms defines a hierarchy of elements” (Riemer, 2010: 142), where for example *hibiscus*, *tulip*, and *rose* are co-hyponyms of *flower*, which is their hyperonym. Meronymy (Greek *meros*: ‘part’) is the relation of part to whole, where the part (e.g. *eye*) is referred to as a meronym of *face*, while the whole (e.g. *face*) is known as the holonym of *eye* (Riemer, 2010: 140). The notion of oppositeness embraces several different types of relation, the most common of which is antonymy. Antonymy is characterised by a relationship of incompatibility between two items with respect to some given dimensions of contrast. Some words, for example, may be associated with more than one antonym, with respect to the dimension of contrast

involved (e.g. *girl* has both *boy* and *woman*, depending on whether the dimension of contrast is sex or age; *sweet* has both *bitter* and *sour*: Murphy, 2003: 173).

Paradigmatic relations hold between items which can occupy the same position in a grammatical structure. This is similar to what Lyons (1968: 431) calls “off-line similarity”, which typically “involve[s] words belonging to the same syntactic category” (Cruse, 2000: 148). It is concerned with associations of similarity, where the words involved stand in complementary distribution (Geeraerts, 2010: 58). The following are examples involving verbs and nouns respectively:

- |         |   |                  |                 |   |               |
|---------|---|------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|
| 1. Fred | — | across the field | 2. May I have a | — | of wine       |
|         |   | <i>ran</i>       |                 |   | <i>glass</i>  |
|         |   | <i>walked</i>    |                 |   | <i>bottle</i> |
|         |   | <i>crawled</i>   |                 |   | <i>carton</i> |

In the first example (1), *ran*, *walked*, and *crawled* are verbs, which stand in complementary distribution in the sentence; the choice of one precludes the others. The nouns (*glass*, *bottle* and *carton*) in the second instance (2) enter into similar paradigmatic relation.

Ideally, words that stand in paradigmatic relations should be of the same grammatical category, but sometimes they are not. For instance, there is no hyperonym of which the following adjectives are hyponyms: *round*, *square*, *oval*, *oblong*, and *triangular*. However, they are all related in a hyponym-like way to the noun *shape*. Relations of this type are sometimes called ‘quasi-relations’; the commonest of these is quasi-hyponymy.

Syntagmatic sense relations hold between items in the same grammatical structure. There is the possibility of a lexical element in a text to co-occur in larger wholes with other elements of the language in terms of, for example, compounds and derivations in the morphological realm, and constituents and sentences in syntax (Geeraerts, 2010: 57). Here, relations between individual items are not usually given names on the lines of hyponymy, antonymy, and so forth, but certain effects of putting meanings together are recognised, such as anomaly (e.g. *a light green illness*), pleonasm (e.g. *dental toothache*), and meaning extension, such as metaphor (e.g. *move mountain*) and metonymy (e.g. *nice wheels*). The requirements for a ‘normal’ combination are described as selectional restrictions or selectional preferences. For

instance, it is by virtue of syntagmatic sense relations, in this case between verb and noun that *Fred ran across the field* is normal, whereas *The field crawled across Fred* is odd. As opposed to paradigmatic relations, syntagmatic relations constitute “on-line co-occurrence” (Lyons, 1968: 431). For Cruse (2000: 149), syntagmatic sense relations are “an expression of coherence constraints” while paradigmatic relations are “an expression of such structuring.” One relevant insight from this review to our study, as Cruse (2000) corroborates, is that paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations function concurrently, syntagmatic relations delimiting the space within which paradigmatic relations operate.

#### **2.3.4 Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT)**

Metaphor, in Krennmayr’s (2011: 12) view, is “the linguistic expression of a cross-domain mapping in thought – usually from a more concrete source domain (e.g. food) to a more abstract target domain (e.g. ideas)”. The patterns of thought underlying linguistic expressions are, therefore, termed ‘conceptual metaphors’, while the expressions themselves are referred to as ‘linguistic metaphors’.

CMT is as one of the offshoots of Cognitive Linguistics, a loosely structured theoretical movement that explicitly embraces the idea that language should be seen in the context of cognition at large: “a belief in the contextual, pragmatic flexibility of meaning, the conviction that meaning is a cognitive phenomenon that exceeds the boundaries of the word, and the principle that meaning involves perspectivization” (Geeraerts, 2010: 182). With the linguistic climate of the 1970s dominated by the formal framework of generative grammar, semantics or pragmatics seemed a peripheral issue. However, there came a general rise in the interest in metaphor and figurative language in the late 1970s (with the collections of papers published by Ortony 1979, and Honeck and Hoffman 1980). Nevertheless, the major force came from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), a book that was an eye-opener for a new cream of linguists that would follow. Since then, metaphor has come to make up for a major area of investigation for cognitive linguists and pragmaticists. The success of Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) work follows their observation that most people viewed metaphor as a “device for the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish”, as a matter of “extraordinary rather than ordinary” characteristic of language alone, as a matter of “words rather than thought or action”



(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 453). They have, however, redefined metaphor and demonstrated on the contrary, through their seminal work, that metaphor is rather “pervasive in everyday life”, not only exclusive to language, but also in thought and action; and one rich site of metaphor use, as our analysis will reveal, is the news language. Hence, “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 454).

There has been a notable degree of convergence in research leading to the development of CMT (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999; Lakoff, 1987, 1992; Kövecses, 2000), which generally rests on two essential propositions: first, the view that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon, rather than a purely lexical one; and second, the view that metaphor should be analysed as a mapping between two domains. The cognitive nature of metaphor has to do with the fact that it is not a purely lexical phenomenon, situated apparently at the level of the language, but is instead a deep-rooted conceptual phenomenon that shapes the way we think (and not just the way we speak). In this way, metaphoric images may be used creatively and for evaluation (as in the case of our newspaper texts) because the sets of expressions that illustrate metaphoric patterns are open-ended; they do not only comprise conventionalised expressions, but may also attract new ones. Metaphoric patterns have also been observed to occur in many other domains outside language; for example, in advertising (Zhang and Gao, 2009), gesture (Cienki and Müller, 2008), etc. A simple case is pointing upward as a sign of positive affect, just as the expression *up* is correlated with the positive end of an evaluative scale (see Cienki and Müller, 2008).

The mappings inherent in metaphoric patterns conceptualise a target domain in terms of the source domain, and “such a mapping takes the form of an alignment between aspects of the source and target” (Geeraerts, 2010: 206). Conceptual metaphors can be understood as a mapping of correspondences (Burnes, 2011: 2): we draw metaphorical expressions from the source domain in order to describe and understand the target domain. The cognitive mapping has revitalised such terminology introduced into literary studies by Richards (1936) as with the source domain corresponding to the ‘vehicle’ of the metaphor, the target domain to the ‘tenor’, and the mapping itself to the ‘ground’. A regular instance in the literature is the LOVE AS A JOURNEY concept where the following correspondences hold (see Geeraerts, 2010; Lakoff, 1992):

**Source**

the travellers  
 the means of transport  
 the journey  
 the obstacles encountered  
 decisions about which way to go  
 the destination of the journey

**Target**

the lovers  
 the relationship itself  
 the evolution of the relationship  
 the difficulties experienced  
 choices about what to do  
 the goals of the relationship

The principle, which according to Lakoff (1992) is neither part of the grammar nor lexicon of English, guiding mapping relation between source and target may be used to distinguish between different types of metaphor (simple and complex) as we shall see in our analysis of newspaper language and style. Mappings such as these are not exhaustive; newspaper reporting offers simple and complex features of correspondences between domains that will shed light on the way reporters conceive and assess the participants and activities going on in the news discourse.

However, as with much groundbreaking research, the CMT has also been heavily criticised (e.g. Jackendoff and Aaron, 1991; Murphy, 1996, 1997, etc.). The major point of critique is their method of data collection: “it is not clear how they accumulated the examples offered in support of their claims” (Jackendoff and Aaron, 1991: 324); “The bulk of the examples seem to be constructed rather than found and are presented out of a larger context” (Murphy, 1997: 98). Much as the CMT is vital to this study, efforts will be made to move beyond ‘invented examples and decontextualised materials’ and apply relevant aspects of the theory to the analysis of (our data) the language used by newspaper reporters. In such everyday-life domain as the news language, it is expected, a deeper understanding of metaphor (language and thought) will be explored in terms of its functions, the motivations for its use, how people (newspaper readers) understand metaphorical language and what kind of effects it might have on them.

## 2.4 Review of related literature

This section attempts a review of previous empirical studies related to the ND discourse in order to specify the gap(s) to be filled by the present study. This is done in the following order: previous studies on media-related aspects of ND discourse and previous studies on politics-related aspects of ND discourse.

#### 2.4.1 Previous studies on media-related aspects of ND discourse

Most pioneer studies of the media (e.g. Fowler *et al.*, 1979; Fowler, 1985, 1991) continue to pay tribute to the British cultural studies paradigm that defines news not only as a reflection of reality, but also as a product shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces. Focus has also been on the linguistic “tools”, such as the analysis of transitivity in syntax, lexical structure, modality, and speech acts. Similarly, other critical discourse analysts, particularly van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1992, 1995), have variously applied a theory of news discourse in critical studies of international news, racism in the press, and the coverage of squatters in Amsterdam.

These notable scholars of the media have, in various degrees, continued to influence the media discourse elsewhere in Nigeria, where scholars have largely applied earlier perspectives in interpreting a plethora of media processes (especially, news reporting) and products (the texts). The bulk of these work has been focused on news headlines (e.g. Taiwo, 2004; Chilwa, 2005; Ayodabo, 2007; Rotimi, 2007), feature articles (e.g. Olowe, 1993; Chude, 2003; Daniel, 2006), news editorials (e.g. Odebunmi, 2007). Very few of these studies have been devoted, like the present study, to news reports (e.g. Alo, 2007; Chilwa, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Omenugha, 2007; Ayoola, 2008).

Alo (2007) focuses on discovering the structural patterns and the linguistic mechanisms employed by news reporters to track people and their identities in the print media; and reveals that “complex nominal groups function to give details concerning the situation and position of persons in the news” (Alo, 2007: 110). From a feminist perspective and using the social constructionist framework, Omenugha (2007) concerns her study with unmasking the sexism inherent in Nigerian news discourse. The study discovers that pattern of news reports in Nigeria, its structure and the events cited as evidence, “continue to eschew the voices of women” (2007: 175), and give men undue focus in the news. With a pragma-linguistic framework of CDA, Ayoola (2008) examines the setting, topics and participants that were projected in the content and context of reports on the Niger-Delta in selected Nigerian newspapers. The study reveals that “Niger-Delta discourse participants also resorted to several pragmatic and discourse strategies, such as the force of logic, the use of figures and percentages, the persuasion of science, interdiscursivity and intertextuality, rumour mongering, name calling, dysphemism, obfuscation and flattery” (2008: 18). The use of CDA is one

thing Chilwa (2011b) has in common with Ayoola (2008), but it adds Corpus Linguistics to analyse the frequently used lexical items by the press to represent the militia groups and their activities. Chilwa (2007), like the present study, uses a stylistic method; but in contrast, it does not pay attention to ideological representations in the news report. Chilwa (2007) attempts to show the discourse devices that are engaged in news texts; the findings demonstrate that the news discourse relies more on contextual and linguistic processes to communicate effectively to the Nigerian reader.

Generally, none of the studies reviewed (except Ayoola, 2008) is related to the present one in terms of approaching media texts from both broad and local perspectives. Ayoola (2008) critically looks at some national and local (Niger Delta) newspapers but the methodology and pragma-linguistic framework of CDA used are insufficient in handling some features of the media texts, and as such may not be representative of the media politics with regard to the Niger Delta. Moreover, Ayoola (2008) is able to focus more on news reporting (process) alone. In contrast, the approach taken by the present study offers an exhaustive but systematic tool for exploring the ideological features of news texts (product) itself, and at the same time considering the ideological practices in the news process.

#### **2.4.2 Previous studies on politics-related aspects of ND discourse**

The covert politics in the processes and products of the media has attracted significant scholarly interest. The Niger Delta news reports, constituting our data in this study, is an effective means through which the political play going on among the parties involved in the oil issues will be exposed. This is especially relevant as the Niger Delta politics continues to affect both the economy and peace of Nigeria. Therefore, given the role of political discourse in the enactment, reproduction, and legitimisation of power and domination, we may also expect many critical discourse studies of political text and talk.

In linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse studies, political discourse has received attention outside the more theoretical mainstream. Seminal work comes from Paul Chilton; see, e.g., his collection on the language of the nuclear arms debate (Chilton 1985), as well as later work on contemporary nukespeak (Chilton, 1988) and metaphor (Chilton, 1996; Chilton and Lakoff, 1995). Although studies of political discourse in English are internationally best known because of the hegemony of

English, there have actually been substantial contributions from other European languages. Germany, for example, has a long tradition of political discourse analysis, especially about Bonn's politicians (e.g. Zimmermann, 1969; Klaus, 1971; Bachem, 1979); the study of the language of war and peace (e.g. Pasierbsky, 1983); of speech acts in political discourse (e.g. Holly, 1990); and of fascist language and discourse particularly, the lexicon, propaganda, media, and language politics (e.g. Ehlich, 1989). In France, the study of political language has a respectable tradition in linguistics and discourse analysis, also because the barrier between (mostly structuralist) linguistic theory and text analysis was never very pronounced. Discourse studies are often corpus-based and there has been a strong tendency toward formal, quantitative, and automatic (content) analysis of such big datasets, often combined with critical ideological analysis (e.g. Pecheux, 1969, 1982; Guespin, 1976). Critical political discourse studies in Spain and especially also in Latin America has been very productive. Famous are the early critical semiotic (anticolonialist) studies of Donald Duck (e.g. Dorfman and Mattelart, 1972 in Chile and Lavandera *et al.* 1986, 1987, in Argentina) take an influential socio-linguistic approach to political discourse. Work of this group has been continued and organized in a more explicit CDA framework (see especially, Pardo's (1996) work on legal discourse).

In Nigeria, studies on political discourse have largely been concentrated on speeches of warlords/crisis participants (e.g. Oha, 1994; Adegaju, 2005; Alo and Igwebuiké, 2009), speeches of politicians (e.g. Adetunji, 2009; Babatunde and Odepidan, 2009), political manifestoes (e.g. Olateju and Adesanmi, 2009), political interviews (e.g. Odebunmi, 2008), etc. Worse still, not enough linguistic studies on political discourse have paid attention to issues of the ND, which gives the present study more justification. One major advantage that the present study has over other studies both in media and political discourses is its theoretical power to neatly expose an outline of the media biases, their political attachments, and the ideological persuasions initiated in their language in one analysis of the study.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter has been the review of related literature and theories adopted for the analysis of data. This has been divided into three broad sections: relevant concepts (e.g. context, style and stylistics), theoretical framework (e.g. critical

stylistics, CDA, evaluative semantics, and conceptual metaphor), and the previous studies on the ND discourse (e.g. media-related and politics-related aspects).

Context, as it is applied to the analysis, takes insights from relevant aspects of Halliday's (1978) CoS, particularly focusing on three abstractions: language as system (related to the notion of choice as realised by the three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual), language as institution (relates to variations according to use as realised in register: field, tenor, and mode), and language as metaphor of social reality (describes language as capturing the 'reality' of the world of its speakers/writers within which it functions). Various concepts of style have also been considered and Osundare's (2003) representative categorisation (in terms of: style as choice, style as difference – deviation and variation, and style as iteration) has been reviewed as the most relevant to the study. Likewise, we have considered the history and manifestations of stylistics (e.g. text-oriented, context-oriented, and applied); and aspects of text-oriented (formalist and text-linguistic) stylistics, context-oriented (pragmatic, radical and functional) stylistics, and applied (cognitive and statistical) stylistics are found relevant to the study.

The theoretical framework is anchored on the modified version of Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics considering the utmost importance of textual analysis, systematicity and verifiability to the present study, which CDA approaches do not fully provide. Four aspects of Jeffries' (2010) analytical tools for critical stylistics have been reviewed as they are applicable to lexical choices. They are: naming and describing, equating and contrasting, viewing actions and events, and hypothesising. Considering the nuances of our data, these strategies have been supported with van Dijk's (1999, 2001) context model, which has been observed to be the most workable. van Dijk's categories of context (e.g. domain, setting, cognition and participant roles), therefore, provide an effective spring board for the application of the selected tools of Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics. Evaluative semantics (particularly aspects of lexical relations) and the CMT are also incorporated into the framework to cater for the cognitive aspect of the language use (principally, for reporters' assessment) in news texts. Also important here is van Dijk's (1998, 2005) socio-cognitive idea of ideology, especially the theoretical strategies for the elaboration of formats for the structure of ideologies based on the interface between cognition (formation of self-schema of a group) and society (taking place on the shared social representations).

For the understanding of the focus and specific contributions of this study to related literature(s), a number of empirical studies on media-related and politics-related aspects of ND discourse have been reviewed. First, the bulk of the research on media-related aspects has unduly been carried out on other genres of the media text but the news text. Ayoola (2008) is the closest study to the present one in terms of considering both the national and local newspapers, and focusing on the ND. However, contrary to the present study, Ayoola (2008) does not specifically focus on the news report, but on other feature writing on the ND. His pragma-linguistic framework of CDA, which seems insufficient in handling some features of the ND discourse, differs from the theoretical focus of the present study in terms of descriptive procedure. Therefore, the analytical model of critical stylistics employed in this study not only makes the analysis more objective by providing pseudo-scientific means of discovering the hidden meaning of the text, but also makes the procedures of analysis and interpretation systematic and explicit.

Second, studies on politics-related aspects have also unduly concentrated on speeches of warlords/crisis participants, speeches of politicians, political manifestoes, political interviews, etc. Like the media discourse, not enough linguistic studies on political discourse have paid attention to the media politics especially with regard to the issues of the ND. The present study has a pedagogical difference, in that it promises to provide us with a critical metalanguage of the oil politics in the ND, which can help the newspaper reader formulate his/her intuitive reaction to find out what a news text is doing or is meant to be doing.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and describes the procedure involved in carrying out the research. This is presented under the following headings: research design, data collection procedure, population of study, sampling procedure, method and model of analysis, and conclusion.

#### 3.2 Research design

The research is essentially a descriptive study which uses the sample data of an investigation to document, describe, and explain what is existent or non-existent on the present status of a phenomenon being investigated (Ali, 2006). It interprets, synthesises, and integrates the data, showing the interrelationships and pointing out their implications, which may be relevant to showing a pattern of occurrence of a phenomenon or solving a problem based on population number representations (Aworh *et al.*, 2006). The descriptive design is adopted here because the study aims to investigate the link between lexico-stylistic choices and media ideologies through the styles and strategies used by newspaper reporters in relaying information on a topical social and economic issue – Nigeria's ND conflict.

#### 3.3 Data collection procedure

The six ND states defined in the political sense (in chapter one) as the south-southern minority ethnic groups were considered as the area of study. They comprise Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states. The area was chosen because of its rampant cases of hostility in form of abduction of oil workers, vandalisation of oil facilities, armed struggle between the ND insurgent youths and the Nigerian law enforcement agents, etc., which have culminated into what is known in the media today as ND crisis or conflict. Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states are known

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in the news to record most of the hostilities; Akwa Ibom is characterised by human trafficking; while Edo and Cross River states record the least occurrences. The ND conflicts, as most opinion leaders have corroborated, are not unconnected to such fundamental issues as marginalisation in the control of the (oil) resources generated from their (ND peoples) fatherland, especially when the exploration and production activities affect the ecosystem in their communities and hence (the mainstay) livelihood of their peoples. These have bred restiveness, with concomitant unemployment or 'unemployability', which motivates the ND youths into these acts of hostility.

One major method for data collection in this study is field trip. A round trip was undertaken to major ND states and cities where the newspaper houses were located. The news reports were obtained from their libraries and photocopied. In cases where there were not enough reports in the libraries on the ND conflict or no access to the reports, the internet was used to make up.

For the confirmation of our findings, some stakeholders (e.g. newsmen, ND inhabitants, other Nigerian citizens that are not resident in the ND, among others) were randomly interviewed. For the authentication of the data, the researcher also visited strategic locations in the study area for a visual assessment of the situation. Important places visited included cities and state capitals namely, Asaba, Warri, Obodo, Opumami, Ovwian-Aladja, Out Jeremi (in Delta State), Port Harcourt, Omok, Oporoza, Kunukunuma, Okerenkoko, Chanomi creeks (Rivers State), coast of Bayelsa, Yenagoa, Brass, Ogbotobo, Ogboinbiri, Ekeremor Axis (Bayelsa State), and Uyo, Eket, (Akwa-Ibom State). We also interacted with inhabitants of the towns and villages on matters relating to their welfare with regard to ND crisis and their general views on social, political and economic matters affecting Nigeria as a whole. The trips enabled us to personally assess the extent to which our newspaper reports could be relied upon as fact, opinion or fiction.

### **3.4 Population of the study**

The population of the study comprised 290 English-medium newspaper reports on the ND conflict from all the nationally-circulated newspapers in Nigeria, on the one hand, and all the regionally published newspapers in the ND region, on the other. The newspapers cover a period of 13 years (1997 and 2009). The justification for selecting

the ND-based newspapers alongside the nationally-circulated newspapers is based on the need to have a balanced view and interpretation of the reported events of the conflicts, and to be able to draw conclusions from a more objective perspective. This is the point where most studies on news discourse have limited themselves by focusing on the national papers alone. The 13 years selected is intended to capture the newspaper reports of the ND conflict two years before Obasanjo's regime (1999-2007), which is marked for its unkind handling of the conflicts, and two years after. In addition, the choice of the written medium, whose language of communication is English, in a multilingual country like Nigeria is deliberate. It tallies with Igboanusi and Lothar's view that:

English has overwhelmingly dominated the print media in Nigeria. The most prestigious newspapers and magazines are all in English. While most of the 36 states of the federation have no newspaper in the indigenous language, almost every state has at least one newspaper, published in English apart from magazines, bulletins, etc. (2005: 12)

This dominance is due to the wide coverage and function English has in the Nigerian society.

### **3.5 Sampling procedure**

The sample size for this study was 150 newspaper editions: 81 ND-based newspaper reports and 69 national newspaper reports. Purposive sampling was found appropriate for a descriptive research of this sort. Apart from saving a lot of time and resources, it made it possible to undertake a safe and systematic selection of samples from an enormous assortment of data. Through this sampling technique, the researcher selected four regional newspapers, namely, *The Tide* (from Rivers State), *The Pointer* (Delta State), *New Waves* (Bayelsa State), and *Pioneer* (Akwa Ibom State), and four nationally-circulated newspapers, namely, *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *THISDAY*. The national papers (NNPs) were selected mainly because they had been in existence before 1997; and because of their forthrightness and a relatively higher coverage and wider readership, which they enjoy in Nigeria. The ND-based papers (NDPs), on the other hand, were chosen, not only for their longevity, but also for their comparative consistency in reporting the conflicts over the period selected. They have a limited spread in that they do not have wide acceptability or readership beyond a few

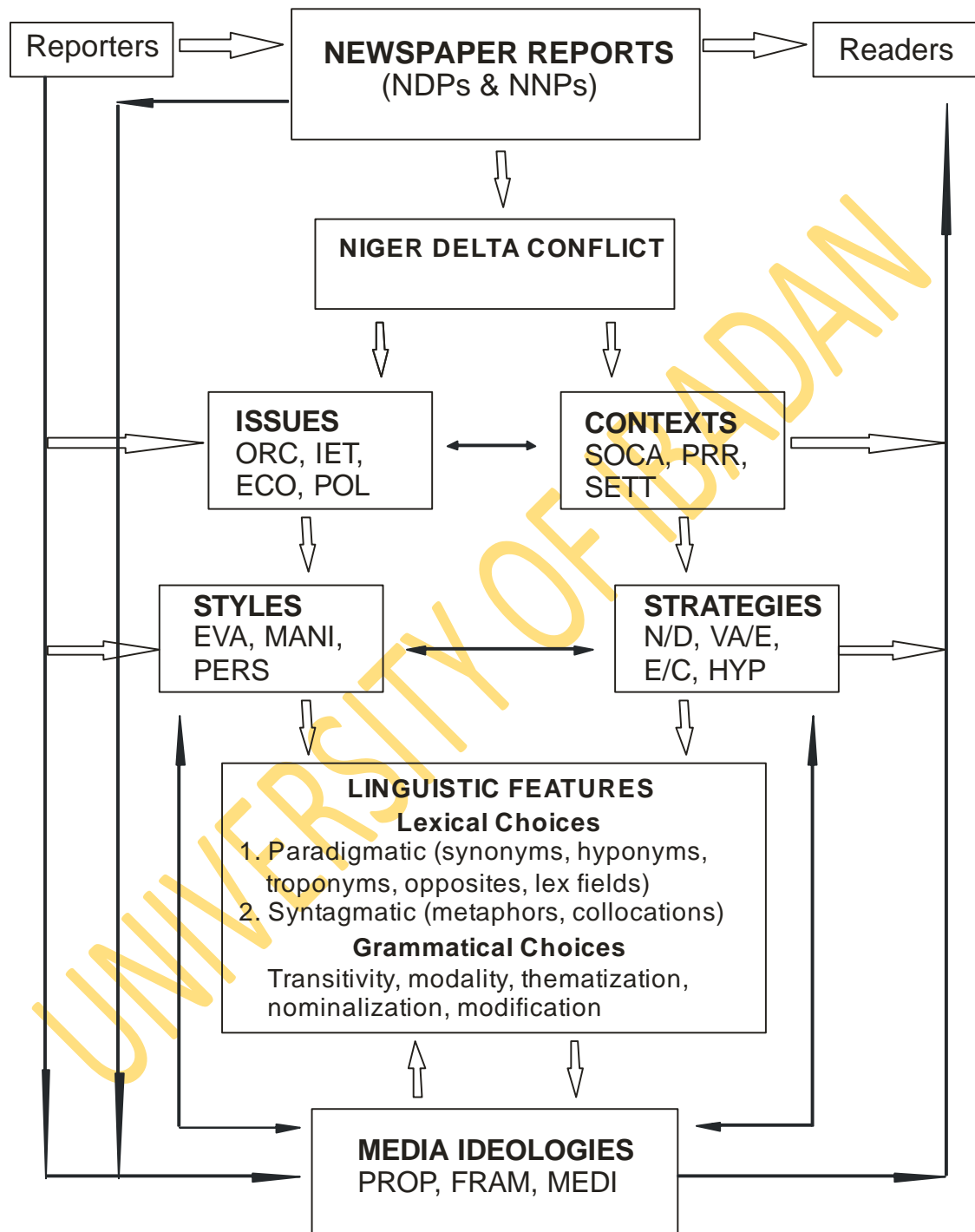
states in the Niger Delta. Additionally, the four ND states (Rivers, Delta, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom) from which the four ND-based newspapers were selected, were chosen based on their highest frequencies (among the entire ND states) in the occurrence of the conflicts in the region. While the 150 newspapers selected (the sample) constitutes 52%, the four states chosen represents 67%, of the entire population. These percentages are used to represent the entire population. A list of the newspaper excerpts used in our analysis is presented in the appendix section.

### **3.6 Method and model of analysis**

The selected newspaper texts (the data) were subjected to descriptive (stylistic and statistical) and interdisciplinary analysis. Descriptive stylistics, in Crystal and Davy's (1969: 64) view, is the organisation of stylistic features "within the framework of some general linguistic theory". This enabled the researcher to easily recognise the choice of certain lexical variables and the styles they point to; and identify the stylistic strategies and the media ideologies that are associated with them. Statistical stylistics (sometimes called stylo-statistics) is computational in nature. It is the analysis of language as a system of variation involving the quantification of data mainly with the use of percentages. It helped the researcher to empirically count, classify, tabulate and ultimately interpret the patterns of occurrence of stylistic (lexical) features found in the texts. The interdisciplinary approach is a common feature of studies in the new critical paradigm (see Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000), and critical stylistics is one of the offshoots. The analysis involved relevant aspects of pragmatics, cognitive science, and critical theories. The unifying assumption here is that text is construed as verbalisations of sociocultural and political values, and as such, its analysis should encompass any aspects of other texts and theories that are found useful in enriching the context of use.

The critical-stylistic model, adopted for the analysis of the data, is descriptive and multidimensional, aimed at (a textual analysis) identifying the styles used by the news reporters and their lexical indices, and examining their relationship to media ideologies. Therefore, the analytical model proposed for the data analysis derives from modified versions of Jeffries' (2010) critical-stylistics, van Dijk's (2000, 2001) context models, and insights from evaluative (lexical) semantics and conceptual metaphor. The analytical model is graphically presented in Figure 3.1 below:

**Figure 3.1: A proposed critical-stylistic model for the analysis of the ND conflict newspaper reports**



The critical stylistic model, as the diagram shows, centres on the newspaper reports, which make up the data for the study. It indicates a broad communication between the news reporters and readers; while the communicative interface becomes the newspaper reports, which are divided into two sets: ND-based newspapers (NDPs) and national newspapers (NNPs). The reporter and reader are one category of the participants involved in the ND conflict, which the newspaper reports portray. The ND conflict includes certain issues and contexts which constrain the styles, strategies, and language (lexical choices) used by the reporters. The lexical choices consequently betray certain media ideologies, which in turn influence the styles and strategies found in the newspaper reports. The readers finally get the effects of the media ideologies, which through specific strategies, are channelled through the language and style of the newspapers available to them (readers).

In the ND conflict discourse, there are peculiar issues and contexts. Four issues motivate the conflicts as represented in the discourse; they are: ownership and resource control (ORC), inter-ethnic (IET), ecological (ECO), and political (POL) issues. The ownership and resource control and ecological issues are the most volatile issues that do not only prompt the conflicts the most, but also influence the newspaper reporters largely. For example, the reporters' lexical choices in reporting on these issues are found to be tilted towards the neutral side of the continuum. In situations like these, the reporters can only mediate between the opposing groups. Other issues surrounding Nigeria politics and inter-ethnic conflicts among the ND communities give the reporters ample liberty to influence the readers' outlook on the events reported to them. This is done by assessing the events and possibly framing up certain participants, and/or misinforming the readers.

The contexts influence the lexical choices made in the reports with regard to the conflict discourse. Context is taken from a cognitive dimension in the model following van Dijk's (2000, 2001) context models, where he proposed four context structures; namely, domain, setting, cognition and participant role relations. However, in our present model, considering the peculiarities of our data, which allowed us to incorporate relevant aspects of Halliday's (1978) CofS (e.g. field of discourse: social activity), the four categories of van Dijk's have been modified and collapsed into three as the diagram shows; namely, social actions (SOCA), participant role relations (PRR), and setting (SETT). These three components follow a logical and organic order

whereby the first leads to the second, and the second to the third. Social actions are conceived in terms of global and local actions, which house the on-going actions in the discourse. For van Dijk, global actions are conceived as group-based concepts that cut across a particular social action, while local actions are concrete or abstract actions that specify the global actions (2001: 22). For participant role relations, van Dijk (2001) identifies three basic types of roles in which the participants engage themselves: interactional, communicative, and social roles. Interactional roles account for the various participants involved in physical contact, such as, security officials and kidnap suspects, etc.; communicative roles account for the various production roles in institutional or authoritative situations (which come up after the interactional contact), such as, eye-witnesses/health or security authorities and newspaper correspondents, etc. The relations between these participants involve a vast area of representation, which controls virtually all levels of discourse, especially the lexical choices.

The issues and contexts relate in a number of ways in the conflicts. All the issues (ORC, ECO, IET and POL) identified feed the the contexts (SOCA, PRR and SETT), which in turn influence both the reporters' lexical choices and the readers' understanding of them. Specifically, the setting contains the enactment of the social actions (conflicts) prompted by the issues; the participants play their discourse roles in relation to the political issues in the conflict discourse.

Our analysis of style is guided by Osundare's (2003) three broad categories (the choice, difference, and iteration perspectives) through which three dimensions of style are observed in our newspaper reports, namely, evaluative (EVAL), manipulative (MANI), and persuasive (PERS) styles. On the other hand, our analysis of the stylistic strategies was informed by Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics toolkit, from which was selected four tools with respect to our focus on lexical choices. The stylistics strategies include: naming/describing (N/D), equating/contrasting (E/C), viewing action/events (VA/E), and hypothesising (HYP). The styles and strategies relate in such a manner that the evaluative style is realised through naming/describing; the manipulative style through viewing actions/events; while the persuasive style is through equating/contrasting and hypothesising. The linguistic model for naming/describing includes metaphor and noun group; equating/contrasting utilises noun group apposition, relational transitivity choices (for equating), complementaries, gradable antonymy, converses, and directional opposition (for contrasting); viewing

actions/events includes the transitivity system (e.g. intentional material action, superventional material action, and material action event); and hypothesising uses the modality system (e.g. epistemic and boulomaic).

The styles and strategies are in turn marked by specific lexical choices that manifest in the newspaper reports. Our idea of lexical choices is situated within evaluative semantics, where lexical relations and collocations are catered for by insights from Cruse (2000, 2006), Geeraerts (2010), and Riemer (2010); while conceptual metaphors are guided by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The three sets of lexical choices found include: lexical relations (LX REL), collocations (COLL) and metaphors (METPH). The lexical relations are indexed by specific relationships of synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, oppositions, and lexical fields that the lexical items in the reports go into. The collocations are found to be marked largely by lexical patterns where the qualifying adjectives bear the evaluation. The conceptual metaphors are realised from three main source domains; namely: crime, hunting and military.

In the same way the styles and strategies used by the reporters are marked by the lexical choices made in the newspapers, so also specific media ideologies are betrayed by the lexical choices. Three media ideologies are implied from the styles and lexical choices; namely, propagandist (PROP), framist (FRAM), and mediator (MEDI) ideologies. The propagandist ideology is realised through specific lexical relations and collocations; framist ideology through definite metaphors and lexical relations; while mediator ideology is also through particular lexical relations and collocations. Thus, while persuasive style relates to propagandist ideology, evaluative style to framist ideology, manipulative style is associated with mediator ideology.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

By and large, we have in this chapter considered the research methodology and framework for the analysis of data. The research is a descriptive study which aimed to explore the relationship between lexico-stylistic choices and media ideologies through the styles and strategies used by newspaper reporters in conveying information on the ND conflicts. Four states (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers) in the ND region were considered to represent the entire states in the study area because of their higher cases of the conflicts. Data for the study were collected through field trips and sampled from eight English-medium newspapers in Nigeria: four NNPs

(*THISDAY*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard*) and four NDPs (*The Tide*, *Pioneer*, *New Waves* and *The Pointer*).

The method of analysis is both descriptive (stylistic and quantitative) and interdisciplinary. A critical stylistic model was developed for the analysis of the data, which has been able to demonstrate that there is a link between the lexico-stylistic choices found in the data and the newspaper reporters' ideological positions. This was achieved through a systematic examination of the issues and contexts in the ND conflict discourse, styles and strategies in the conflict news reports, and their lexical indices.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### ISSUES AND CONTEXTS IN THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT DISCOURSE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on identifying the issues in the ND conflict discourse and discussing the relevant context categories that influence the lexical choices made by the newspaper reporters with respect to the issues. The chapter will be developed in the following order: issues in the ND conflict discourse (ownership and resource control, ecological, inter-ethnic, and political issues), contexts in the ND conflict discourse (social activity, role relations and cognition, and setting), and conclusion.

#### 4.2 Issues in the ND conflict discourse

Many topics come to mind when the ND discourse is at issue. The issues in the ND conflict discourse are not new-fangled; they are deduced from the headlines and read on the pages of Nigerian dailies with respect to the occurrence of crisis. Four issues have been identified as influencing the activities going on in the ND conflict discourse (making up our data); they are: ownership and resource control issues, ecological issues, inter-ethnic issues, and political issues. All the issues are found to centre on oil in two ways; namely, oil exploitation, exploration, and sharing of its attendant windfall, on the one hand, and the negative physical, health, social, and economic conditions experienced by the ND inhabitants, on the other hand. Evidence in the data points to the fact that ownership and resource control and ecological issues are more sensitive and affect the four ND states studied. In almost all the newspapers, the issues are observed to form not only a greater part of the motivation for the conflicts, but also induce the reporters' tact in assessing of the crisis events and participants (this is the aspect we shall consider under Styles and Strategies in Chapter five). The inter-ethnic issues are rife in Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states; hence, the high incidence of communal clashes recorded from these areas in the data. The **ONONYE, C.F. (2014). Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.**

political issues (though affect the entire ND region) are implicit, but connected to all the other issues. Hence, any conflict relating to any of the issues has a political dimension, which becomes an attraction for the media. The issues are discussed in succession:

#### **4.2.1 Ownership and resource control (ORC) issues**

ORC issues, as one of the most popular topics in ND conflict discourse, are reflected in both sets of our newspaper samples. These issues go back to 1978 (precisely March 29), when the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) under General Olusegun Obasanjo's administration promulgated the Land Use Act of 1969, which transferred the ownership of all lands, and the natural resources accruing to/from them, to the FGN. By virtue of this regulation, successive Nigerian governments have continued to award license to multinational oil companies many of which are owned by non-indigenes of the ND region. This unveils the two ideological questions posed by Ayoola (2010: 25-6): "who is/are the real owners of the oil derived from the ND region? Should ND indigenes not have more say than other Nigerians in matters that have to do with the allocation of oil blocs and the sharing of their attendant revenues?"

With these questions in mind, an average ND person quickly reflects back when cash crops such as cocoa, rubber, kolanuts, palm oil and groundnuts were the major sources of Nigeria's economic base, the governments of Northern and Western Nigeria, for instance, had real control over the bulk of the wealth generated from their regions. This was known as the 'Principle of Derivation': 50% per cent of any generated revenue went to the region and 50% to the FGN. Now that cash crops are no longer relevant for foreign exchange and crude oil exploited from the ND region now accounts for nearly 96 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (Ogbogbo, 2005: 169), the pendulum appears to have swung against the interest of the ND indigenes. The principle of derivation appears to have been abandoned. With this mind frame, most of the ND activists and insurgents try to struggle (employing violence, kidnap, etc as political weapons), to regain control of the resources of their fatherland, or at least attract the attention of the FGN and the outside world to the need for equity and justice. It is in this spirit that the reported statement was made by one of the foremost activist groups in the region in the excerpts below:

### **Excerpt 1**

The peace accord signed last Thursday by militants in Bayelsa State was violated violently yesterday when gunmen invaded the riverine settlement of Aleibiri and abducted the father of the state Deputy governor, Chief Simon Ebebi, the Alei of Aleibiri kingdom.

...

Meanwhile, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has distanced its members from the act which it ... called internal politics that had nothing to do with the *genuine Ijaw struggle for self determination and resource control*.

(Text D35: *Vanguard* Dec. 11, 2007)

The key phrase in the excerpt is: “genuine Ijaw struggle for self determination and resource control”. Of course, kidnap and other worse violence make up the struggle devices, but not for ransom or monetary purpose as earlier established in the text. It is in view of the degree of determination and the humanitarian equity and justice behind ND struggle that the successive Nigerian governments have tried to pacify the indigenes with a ministry (Niger Delta Affairs) and a commission (NDDC) to look into their issues. Up till 29 May 1999, only 7.5 per cent of the oil revenue was allocated to oil producing states. The stipulation of 13 per cent revenue derivation for ND states by Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution and the compliance by the Obasanjo administration was seen as a major breakthrough for the ND struggle over the control of its ancestral resources. That apart, the ‘genuine’ in the key phrase is significant: there are genuine ND activists, who focus on the quest in spite of the bitterness and media labels involved, and there are others who engage in the activities just for monetary gains. This means that some of the ND youths have seen the struggle as a means of survival in the absence of gainful employment or employable skills.

#### **4.2.2 Ecological (ECO) issues**

Like those of ownership and resource control, conflicts relating to ECO issues cut across our data sets. Environmental degradation, as confirmed in earlier studies (Chiluwa, 2011: 198), happens to be the most devastating effect of oil exploration in the ND region. Instead of development, the ND has witnessed green deprivation, worsening poverty, economic disempowerment, and increased social and cultural threats (Human Rights Watch, 2002, cited by Obi and Okwechime, 2004: 357). This situation has consequently wiped out the livelihood of many indigenes. Worse still,

health and education are also affected; in fact, the lack of up-to-date educational facilities in the region has equally left many youths with irrelevant skills, and consequently rendered them unemployed and unemployable into skilled positions in the oil companies or their subsidiaries. The prevailing context of hunger, unemployment and lack occasioned by ecological dilapidation easily crystallised into the building blocks for crime, violence and armed struggle in the ND region. In the excerpt below, a community leader in Rivers State explains why he and his community youths have violently interrupted the activities of an oil company in their area for not signing an agreement with them:

**Excerpt 2**

“We don’t have anywhere to go to, we must not run away from our lands even though they have made it [sic] *not manageable* for us. We will instead force them to provide alternative for us or show some concern in developing our youths because the company is the only thing we have here,” he said. ...

“...we don’t have *roads, no good water to drink or fish, no reasonable farmlands for our youths to farm on* ... all we demand is simple, let us agree on how to address these issues....”

Duabo told our newsmen.

(Text B10: *The Pioneer* Jun. 25, 2007)

By the mention of such expressions as “[no] roads, no good water to drink or fish, no reasonable farmlands for our youths to farm on” (in the second paragraph) and “not manageable” (in the first) in the text, it is already clear that poor ecological conditions are at issue. Virtually every ND community has (more or less) an adverse ecological issue (ranging from housing, land/road, water, to air pollution) to contend with. Apart from the FGN’s developmental programmes, the oil companies in the region, whose activities directly contribute to the pollution, are expected to ease off the burden of the pollution on their respective host communities. This will go a long way in preventing some of the conflicts that may arise like in the case excerpted above. Poor environmental conditions and/or insensitivity of the government or the oil companies involved have become a recurring issue that almost all ND peoples readily react to whenever opportunities call.

### 4.2.3 Inter-ethnic (ITE) issues

ITE issues here are mainly reported by the NDPs (especially, *The Pointer* and *The Tide*), and as earlier mentioned, are common in Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa states (in that order). The NNPs are found not to give priority to inter-ethnic issues. Generally, there were tensions between the FGN and the state governments in the ND over the implementation of the 13% derivation and a revenue allocation formula designed to return a substantial part of the resources generated in the ND to the region. Just as evidence of conflicts abounds between members of different ethnic groups, so also are conflicts between members of the same community. Studies (e.g. Okonta and Douglas, 2001; Maier, 2000) have shown that the bulk of the tussles has always centred on material rewards in terms of commissions, appointments, contracts, and socio-political relevance; and one of the tangible qualifications for these rewards is playing host to oil companies or local government headquarters. A specific example is the relocation of Warri-South Local Government Council headquarters from Ogbe-Ijoh to Ogidigben by the FGN in 2007, which sparked off bitter protests and bloodletting (Imobighe *et al.*, 2002). Some of the violent inter-ethnic clashes between the Ijaw and Itshekiri that resulted from this group-induced FGN's gesture were reported in the newspapers making up our data:

#### **Excerpt 3**

An unspecified number of people were feared dead and several others injured as Ijaw and Itshekiri youths *resumed* hostilities yesterday over relocation of Warri South Local Government headquarter [sic] from Ogbe-Ijoh to Ogidigben.

Also several houses and stores razed during the feud which *started around midnight till 4 am*.

Sporadic exchange of gunfire was reported while the rampaging youths went round burning houses and other structures at Ogbe-Ijoh market and Macaiver area of the town.

(Text C16: *The Pointer* Jan. 2, 2008)

The proposition in Excerpt 3 (which “started around midnight till 4 am”) shows the magnitude of the conflict. The problems between Ijaw and Itshekiri, like other communities in the region, have existed for years. Also in the text there are indications of the fact (“resumed hostilities”) that the current conflicts between these two neighbours had continued for days. The major cause of the conflict is not far to seek: lands to be occupied by the oil companies and the compensations accruing to them.

The effects of these tribal conflicts (“several house and stores razed”) on the immediate communities, the ND region, and Nigeria at large cannot be overemphasised. They ensure the availability of arms, which gives the youths confidence to carry out violence in the region. The communal clashes have, in this way, produced insurgent youth leaders; in fact, such warlords as Government Ekpemupolo (Tompolo) in Oporoza community, Ateke Tom in Okirika, Asari Dokubo in Gbaramatu, and a host of others, were youth leaders produced from communal conflicts.

#### **4.2.4 Political (POL) issues**

POL issues here are reflected most in the NDPs, although the political concerns surrounding the ND discourse are implicitly connected to the other issues, because virtually all the conflicts reported are found to have political dimensions. Indications abound in the ND discourse that oil exploration and exploitation have “instigated and intensified bitter bloody conflicts between emerging interest groups within and between communities” (Eteng, 1998: 23); and many of the conflicts have political and economic traces. The political issues have been classified into two; namely, issues relating to majority/minority groups, which are tied to the next, marginalisation (or ‘lack of federal presence’, as it is popularised in the media). The minority status of the ND peoples in the larger Nigerian federation has led to their political and economic marginalisation, which the FGN has always presented in a justifiable manner.

The successive Nigerian governments have, however, always used various means, especially the print media, to show the world that the ND is a very volatile region, and the youths, through their constant kidnappings, human trafficking, and armed violence, are frustrating the economic agenda of the government. Thus, the commonness of oil pipeline vandalisation, attack on oil installations, oil bunkering, and kidnapping of foreign oil workers for a ransom by members of the ND insurgent groups in the region are often interpreted by the FGN and its law enforcement agencies as criminal acts. The ND activists, on the other hand, have always struggled to attract the international community not only to their regional issues, but also to alter their politicised status in the media. Hence, their option of violence and armed struggle may have corroborated Fanon’s (1963) proposal of revolutionary violence as antidote to

economic and psychological degradation in Africa. The following excerpt substantiates the role the political issues play in the conflicts:

**Excerpt 4**

“We want you to help us tell Nigerians the truth... We don’t care how much the government is losing. Our leaders and the succeeding Nigerian government have failed us and we are not ready to trust anybody. No Idu graduate has been employed in any Federal government agency or parastatal since that we know of [sic]. None of us has been employed in NAOC here since 1980, the few Idu indigenes that work in NAOC today were the persons employed as well-head operators in 1980 and we think that this is not proper. We feel marginalized despite our communities being major producers of oil and gas,” he said.

(Text A17: *The Guardian* Sep. 3, 2005)

The first sentence of Excerpt 4 (“We want you to help us tell Nigerians the truth”) presupposes that the FGN had attempted to either condemn the actions of the local youths or justify the inadequacy of its development in the community in question. The news actor in the text draws on both statistics and history (“No Idu graduate...since 1980” and “The few Idu indigenes...employed in 1980”) to convince the media and readers of the necessity and genuineness of their actions. This point is further driven home by using the word “marginalized” as one of the effects of the lack of FGN’s (and particularly, NAOC) ‘presence’ in the community.

### **4.3 Contexts in the ND conflict discourse**

Following van Dijk’s (2001) and Halliday’s (1978) context models adopted here, three broad contextual categories have been identified in the data. They include: social action, participant role relations, and setting. We take them in turns:

#### **4.3.1 Social action (SOAC)**

SOAC includes the broad actions going on in the conflict discourse. The crucial question to be asked about discussing this category of context is: in what actions are the participants captured in the newspaper reports? Bearing this in mind, four broad SOACs have, therefore, been condensed from the activities going on in the conflict discourse, which are in turn influenced by a mosaic of the ND issues. The SOACs are grouped with respect to the newspaper headlines; however, in discussing them, excerpts will be utilised from the body of the reports sampled. The SOACs include:

- |                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. disruption of oil operation (DO) | Text A1 – A30 |
| 2. conflict control (CC)            | Text B1 – B32 |
| 3. armed struggle (AS), and         | Text C1 – C34 |
| 4. human-abduction (HA)             | Text D1 – D54 |

The distribution of these actions is summarised with the statistical tools below:

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**Table 4.3.1: SOACs in the ND conflict discourse**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Social Actions</b>	<b>Distribution Based on Newspaper Headlines</b>	<b>Percentage Distribution</b>
1	Disruption of Oil Operation (DO)	30	20.0%
2	Conflict Control (CC)	32	21.3%
3	Armed Struggle (AS)	34	22.7%
4	Human Abduction (HA)	54	36.0%
		150	100%

**Figure 4.3.1.1: Percentage distribution of SOAC**

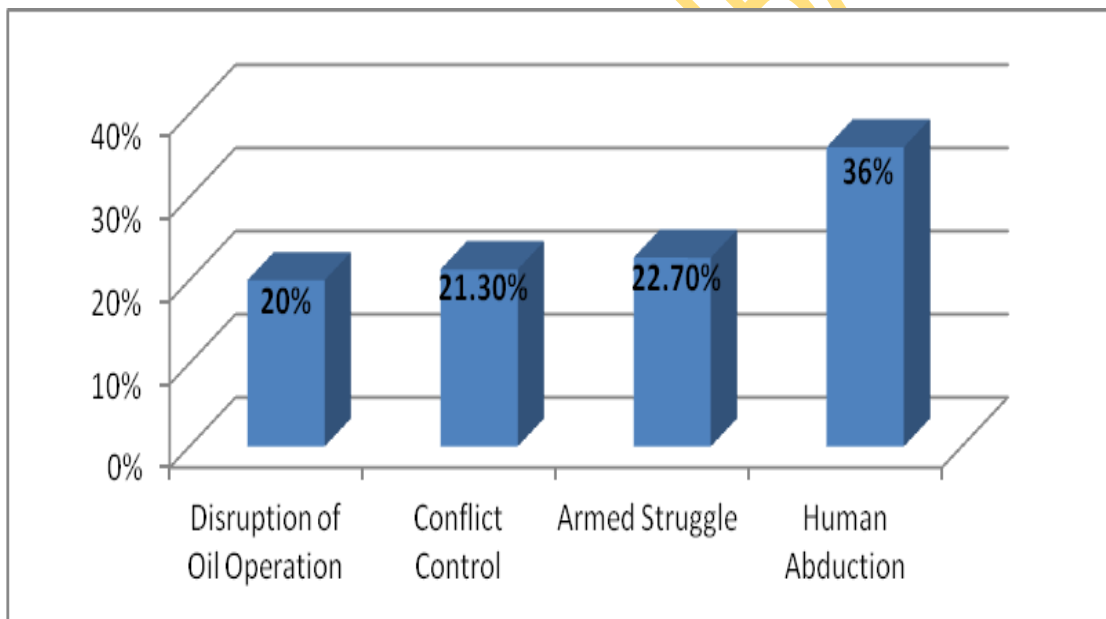


Table 4.3.1 presents (in figures and percentages) the occurrence of the newspaper headlines in terms of the social actions reported in the discourse: 30 newspaper headlines appear under DO; 32 fall under CC; 34 feature under AS, while 54 are grouped under HA. Figure 4.3.1.1, therefore, shows the frequency of the actions. It clearly reveals that the topics related to HA (36%) are reported as dominating the entire actions in the discourse. AS (22.7%) is the next-dominant; this is followed by CC (21.3%), while DO (20%) has the least reported topics in the data. A detailed frequency distribution of the social actions in the two sets of newspaper reports – Niger Delta-based newspapers (henceforth, NDPs) and National newspapers (NNPs) – making up our data is also summarised in the table below.

Table 4.3.2 below, therefore, presents a comprehensive frequency of occurrence of the newspaper headlines against the social actions in the discourse. The first and second columns of the table respectively show the two categories of the newspapers (NDPs and NNPs) and list the respective newspapers belonging to each of them; the third column, split into four, reveals the distribution of the four social actions in the respective categories of the newspapers. Below each category is the total frequency and percentage distribution of the different activities. Among the NDP headlines, HA (29: 35.8%) carries the highest percentage; this is followed by AS (20: 24.7%) and CC (18: 22.2%), while DO (14: 17.3%) takes the lowest portion. On the part of the NNP headlines, HA (25: 36.2%) also preponderates; followed by DO (16: 23.2%), while CC and AS actions come neck and neck as the least prevalent. The last column displays the total frequency and percentage distribution of the total newspaper headlines.

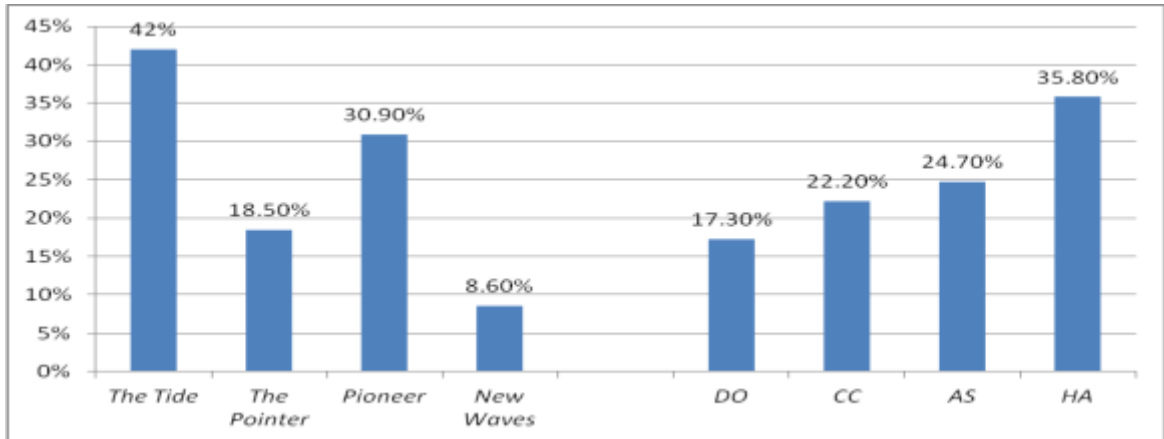
**Table 4.3.2: SOAC in newspaper headlines in NDPs and NNPs**

Category	Newspaper	Frequency Distribution				Frequency Distribution
		DO	CC	AS	HA	
NDP Headlines	<i>The Tide</i>	5	5	8	16	<b>34</b> 42.0%
	<i>The Pointer</i>	6	2	5	2	<b>15</b> 18.5%
	<i>Pioneer</i>	2	9	5	9	<b>25</b> 30.9%
	<i>New Waves</i>	1	2	2	2	<b>07</b> 8.6%
	Percentage	<b>14</b> 17.3%	<b>18</b> 22.2%	<b>20</b> 24.7%	<b>29</b> 35.8%	<b>81</b> 100%
NNP Headlines	<i>The Guardian</i>	3	3	3	7	<b>16</b> 23.2%
	<i>Vanguard</i>	4	3	1	7	<b>15</b> 21.7%
	<i>THISDAY</i>	6	6	6	7	<b>25</b> 36.2%
	<i>The Punch</i>	3	2	4	4	<b>13</b> 18.8%
	Percentage	<b>16</b> 23.2%	<b>14</b> 20.3%	<b>14</b> 20.3%	<b>25</b> 36.2%	<b>79</b> 100%

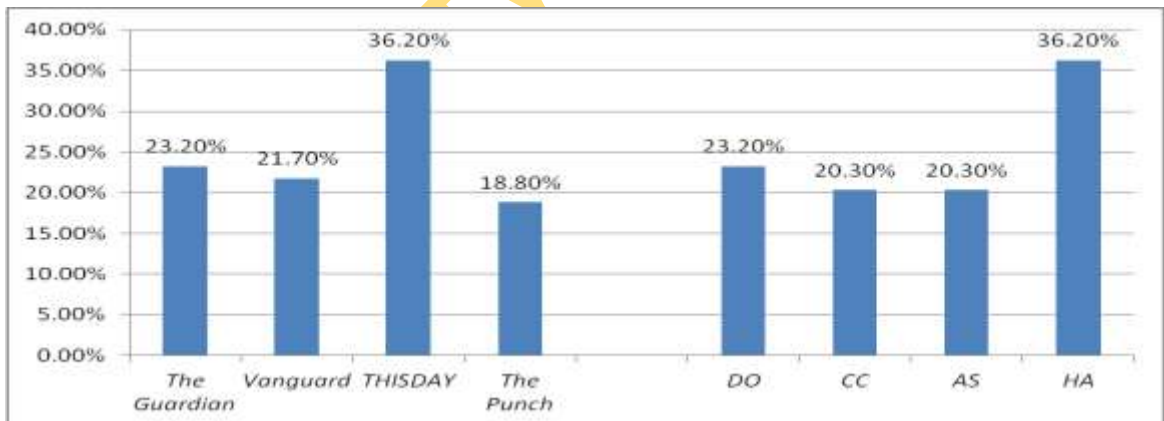
For the NDPs, *The Tide* (34: 42%) reports the highest social actions, followed by *Pioneer* (25: 30.9%), and *The Pointer* (15: 18.5%), while *New Waves* (7: 8.6%) has the least in the category. For the NNPs, *THISDAY* (25: 36.2%) contains the highest number of actions, followed by *The Guardian* (16: 23.2%), and *Vanguard* (15: 21.7%), while *The Punch* (13: 18.8%) reports the least within the category. For a clearer picture, the percentage distributions of the two categories and the social actions captured in their respective newspaper headlines are also graphically illustrated on the charts below:

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**Figure 4.3.2.1: Percentage distribution of newspaper headlines and SOAC in NDPs**



**Figure 4.3.2.2: Percentage distribution of newspaper headlines and SOAC in NNPs**



Looking at the left side of the charts (Figures 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2), *The Tide* (42% among the NDPs) and *THISDAY* (36.2%) predominate in their respective categories. On the right side of the charts, HA dominates the entire social actions in both categories, with 35.8% and 36.2%, respectively. However, while DO (23.2%) is the next-dominant in the NNPs, it takes the least percentage (17.3%) in the NDPs. Also whereas AS (24.7%) and CC (22.2%) actions occur, respectively, as the second and third-most preponderant in the NNPs, the two actions appear on level pegging (20.3%) in the NDPs.

This statistics is particularly significant with regard to the rate of these (conflict) actions witnessed in the ND region within the three periods under consideration in this study: the two years of the Abubakar regime (1997-1998), the eight years of the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007), and the two years after it (2008-2009: part of the Yar'Adua administration). The periodic conflict statistics in Table 4.3.3 reveals that the two years of Yar'Adua's administration witnessed relatively more of the social actions (especially with respect to CC) than the eight years of Obasanjo administration and the two years before it. The tables below present a breakdown and graphic representation of the actions as reported in these periods:

**Table 4.3.3: ND conflicts (SOACs) reported between 1997 and 2009**

<b>Soc-Action Period</b>	<b>DO</b>	<b>CC</b>	<b>AS</b>	<b>HA</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Newspapers Involved</b>
<b>1997-1998 Abubakar</b>	02	0	01	02	05 (3.3%)	<i>The Punch, Vanguard</i> (NDPs); <i>The Pointer</i> (NNPs)
<b>1999-2007 Obasanjo</b>	18	11	18	29	76 (50.7%)	<i>The Punch, The Guardian, THISDAY, Vanguard</i> (NDPs); <i>The Pointer, Pioneer, The Tide</i> (NNPs)
<b>2008-2009 Yar'Adua</b>	10	21	15	23	69 (46.0%)	<i>The Punch, The Guardian, THISDAY, Vanguard</i> (NDPs); <i>The Pointer, Pioneer, The Tide, New Waves</i> (NNPs)
	30	32	34	54	150 (100%)	



**Figure 4.3.3.1: Percentage distribution of SOAC within the periods 1997-2009**

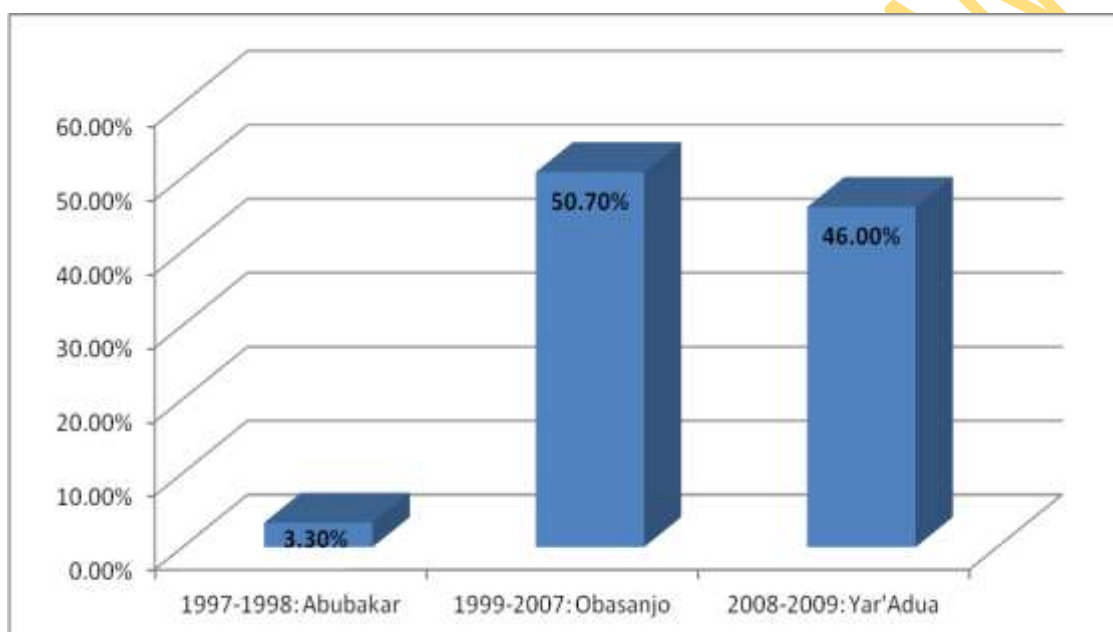


Table 4.3.3 presents the distribution of the actions over the periods between 1997 and 2009. The HA category (54 instances of the newspaper headlines), as earlier hinted, takes the highest occurrence among the entire actions considered over the periods; this is followed by the AS (34 instances) and CC categories (32 instances), while the DO category (30 instances) carries the least occurrence (see also Table 4.3.2 above). The table also illustrates that there was higher incidence of HA (29 against 23 instances), AS (18 against 15) and DO actions (18 against 10) during the Obasanjo administration; but that of Yar'Adua witnessed more of the CC action (21 against 11). It can therefore be said that the two years of the Yar'Adua administration, though experienced relatively less of these conflict actions, made more efforts in curbing the ND conflict than Obasanjo's. This is also confirmed in the data with considerable number of newspaper headlines on amnesty for the ND militants, which is a programme initiated by President Yar'Adua in 2008 supposedly to reach out to the youths of the region. The last column of the table also indicates the newspapers that are associated with the periods. It shows that only two NNPs (*The Punch*, *Vanguard*) and one NDP (*The Pointer*) featured the conflicts during Abubakar (1997-1998) regime among the newspapers sampled. The entire newspapers, however, reported the conflicts from Obasanjo's (1999-2007) tenure to Yar'adua's (2007-2010) administration.

Figure 4.3.3.1 reveals that the Obasanjo administration (50.7%) witnessed the conflict activities the most. This is followed by the two years of the Yar'Adua administration (46%), while the two years of the Abubakar regime considered has lowest occurrence of the activities. That the Obasanjo administration dominated the social actions is not surprising considering the longer time (eight years) considered of it. However, the two years considered of the latter Yar'Adua administration (46%) almost measures up to Obasanjo's (eight-year) tenure (50.7%). Therefore, the relatively high occurrence of these actions during the Yar'Adua administration may not be unexpected considering the fact that the current study was in part motivated by the repeated occurrence of the conflicts between the years 2008 and 2009, and even at the present time.

Two forms of SOACs have been identified, namely, global actions and local actions. According to van Dijk (2001: 22), global actions are conceived as group-based

concepts that cut across a particular social action, while local actions are concrete or abstract actions that specify the global actions. We discuss them in sequence taking into consideration the issues they are affected by in the discourse.

#### **4.3.1.1 Global action (GLOAC)**

There are specific GLOACs associated with the respective SOACs identified. The DO category, for example, has two global actions, the CC and AS have three global actions apiece, while HA includes two global actions. The global actions in their respective social actions are discussed in succession.

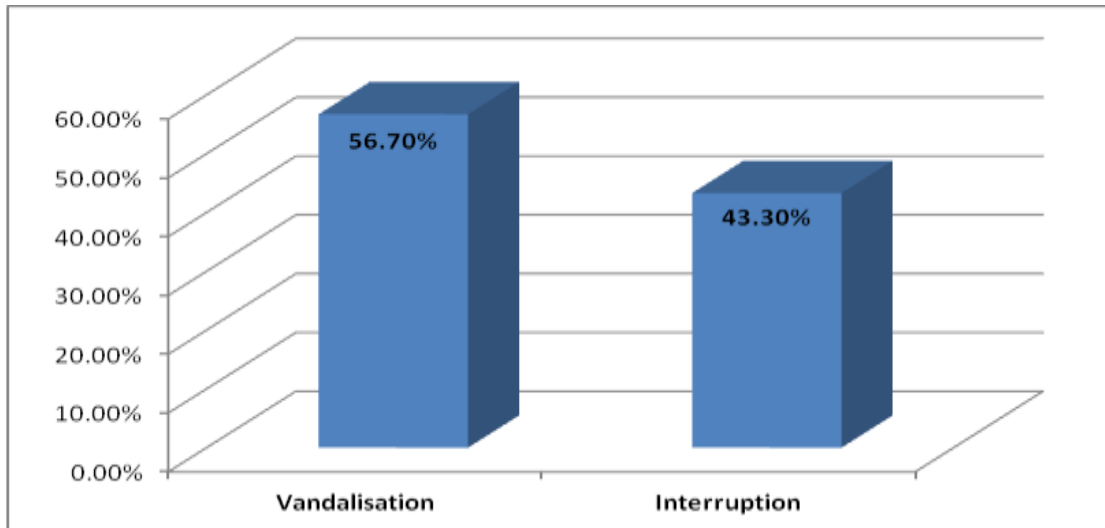
The DO action is marked by two global actions; they are: facility vandalisation, and process interruption (henceforth vandalisation and interruption, respectively). Vandalisation involves the disruption actions which cause physical damage to oil facilities; while interruption includes every action meant to disrupt oil operation but not targeted towards physical damage of oil facilities. (Oil facilities include such machineries as flow stations, oil rigs, tankers, etc). Table 4.3.4 below summarises the distribution of the two global actions in the DO across the newspapers. The first column lists the newspapers in their respective categories, NDPs and NNPs. The second and third columns represent the global actions. The last column sums the newspaper occurrences of the actions. Below each category of newspapers is the frequency and percentage distribution of each global action. In the last row, emboldened, is the cumulative average of the global actions across the two categories of newspapers.

**Table 4.3.4: GLOACs in DO**

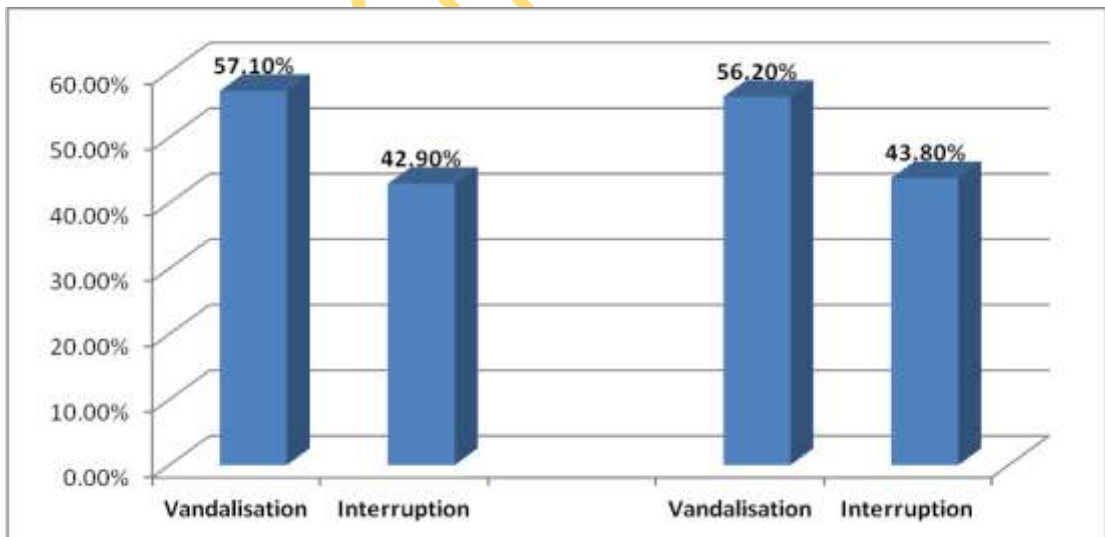
NDPs	Vandalisation	Interruption	Average
<i>The Tide</i>	1	4	5 (35.7%)
<i>The Pointer</i>	5		5 (35.7%)
<i>Pioneer</i>	1	1	2 (14.3%)
<i>New Waves</i>	1	1	2 (14.3%)
Frequency Distribution	8 (57.1%)	6 (42.9%)	14
NNPs			
<i>The Guardian</i>	1	2	3 (18.8%)
<i>Vanguard</i>	1	2	3 (18.8%)
<i>THISDAY</i>	4	2	6 (37.5%)
<i>The Punch</i>	3	1	4 (25.0%)
Frequency Distribution	9 (56.2%)	7 (43.8%)	16 (100%)
<b>Cumulative Distribution</b>	<b>17 (56.7%)</b>	<b>13 (43.3%)</b>	<b>30 (100%)</b>

In the first category (NDP), on the horizontal axis, *The Tide* and *The Pointer* (with 5: 35.7% apiece) can cumulatively be said to carry the highest portion of newspaper reports over *Pioneer* and *New Waves* (also with 2: 14.3% even) on the DO action. The dominance of *The Pointer* and, especially, *The Tide* is not surprising considering the higher occurrence of disruption of oil activities in their states of publication (Delta and Rivers states, respectively) as specifically prompted by resource control issues in the region. *THISDAY* (6: 37.5%) predominates in the NNP category; followed by *The Punch* (4: 25%), while *Vanguard* and *The Guardian* (with 3: 18.8% tie) take the least fraction. However, the most significant statistics here is the one on the vertical axis: the frequency of each global action and the percentage distribution both in the respective newspaper sets and across them. For a clearer picture, these have been graphically presented on the charts below:

**Figure 4.3.4.1: GLOACs in DO**



**Figure 4.3.4.2: GLOACs of DO in NDPs and NNPs**



As Figure 4.3.4.1 reveals, vandalism (56.7%) generally predominates interruption (43.3%). That vandalism dominates here may not have been unexpected considering the fact that this is one of the arm-twisting means through which the ND insurgent youths call the attention of the government and the outside world to certain negative ecological issues or relations with the multinational oil companies in their region. Interruption, because it does not involve physical damage, is often used when an issue is being pressed for the first time or as part of an initial reminder. Most of the time, however, vandalism is preferred; hence the relatively low percentage recorded by interruption. Figure 4.3.4.2 presents the trend of the global actions in the two sets of newspapers. On both left (NDP) and right (NNP) sides of the chart, vandalism (57.1% and 56.2%) also tops the chart as the most preponderant global action engaged in the disruption of oil operations. With respect to interruption, cases reported in the NNPs (43.8%) dominate the NDPs (42.9%). Therefore, the overall attention to vandalism, especially when triggered by ownership and resource control or ecological issues, indicates that both the NDPs and NNPs considered take cognisance of the economic and political risks the action constitutes to the country.

Three global actions characterise the CC category; namely, amnesty for ND insurgents, apprehension, and prosecution of suspects (henceforth, amnesty, apprehension, and prosecution, respectively). Amnesty and apprehension involve contact actions aimed at curbing the conflicts; but while amnesty has to do with dialogue, meeting people and reasoning together, apprehension engages material force in capturing suspects. Prosecution covers actions meant to bring legal action to the suspects when apprehended. The table below summarises the distribution of these global actions in the data sets:

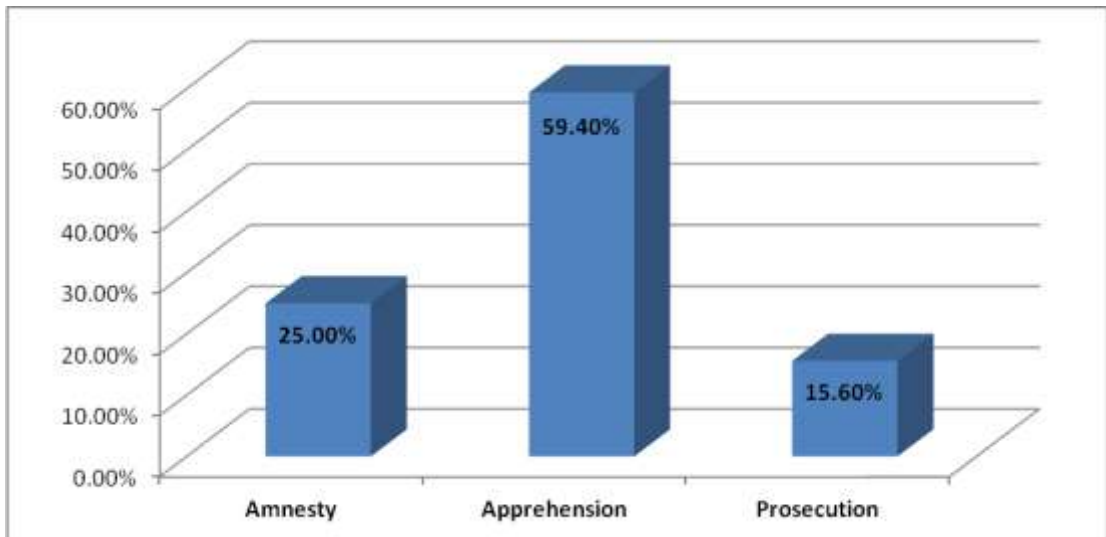
**Table 4.3.5: GLOACs in CC**

NDPs	Amnesty	Apprehension	Prosecution	Average
<i>The Tide</i>		3	1	4 (22.2%)
<i>The Pointer</i>		2	1	3 (16.7%)
<i>Pioneer</i>	3	5	1	9 (50.0%)
<i>New Waves</i>	1	1		2 (11.1%)
Frequency Distribution	4 (22.2%)	11 (61.1%)	3 (16.7%)	18 (100%)
NNPs				
<i>The Guardian</i>	1	2	1	4 (28.6%)
<i>Vanguard</i>		3		3 (21.4%)
<i>THISDAY</i>	2	2	1	5 (35.7%)
<i>The Punch</i>	1	1		2 (14.3%)
Frequency Distribution	4 (28.6%)	8 (57.1%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100%)
<b>Cumulative Distribution</b>	<b>8 (25.0%)</b>	<b>19 (59.4%)</b>	<b>5 (15.6%)</b>	<b>32 (100%)</b>

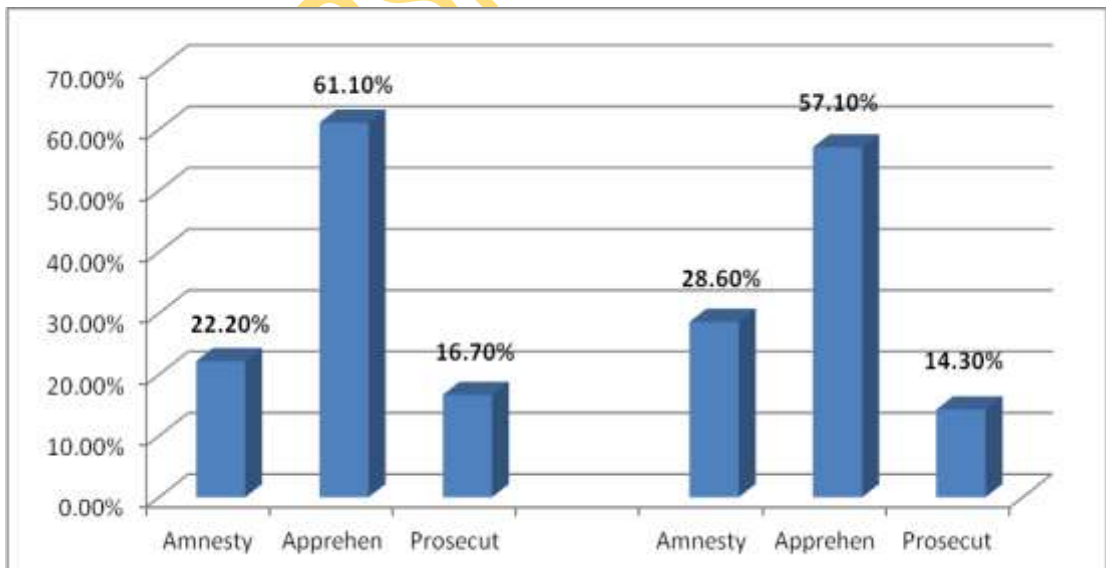


Table 4.3.5 presents the allotment of the global actions across the newspapers. The first column lists the newspaper categories; the next three columns represent the global actions, while the last column sums the newspaper occurrences of the actions. Below each category of newspapers is the frequency and percentage distribution of each global action. In the last row, emboldened, is the cumulative average of the global actions across the two categories of newspapers. Looking at the NDPs, *Pioneer* (9: 50%) carries the highest percentage in the report of the CC category. The next-highest is *The Tide* (4: 22.2%), closely followed by *The Pointer* (3: 16.7%), while *New Waves* (2: 11.1%) takes the least portion. The dominance of *Pioneer* here may not be unconnected to the visible attention paid to security in Akwa Ibom State, especially the pragmatic security approach set up by Governor Victor Attah (1999-2007) and sustained by the next (Godswill Akpabio) administration. In the NNP category, *THISDAY* (5: 35.7%) dominates. *The Guardian* (4: 28.6%) is the next-dominant, also closely followed by *Vanguard* (3: 21.4%), while *The Punch* (2: 14.3%) takes the least fraction. Looking at the global actions, it is important to provide statistical charts of the frequency of each global action and the percentage distribution both in the respective newspaper sets and across them:

**Figure 4.3.5.1: GLOACs in CC**



**Figure 4.3.5.2: GLOACs of CC in NDPs and NNPs**



Figures 4.3.5.1. and 4.3.5.2 above present the frequency distributions of the global actions across and within the newspaper categories, respectively. A uniform trend is observed in the two charts. First, it is clearly illustrated that apprehension, both in general (59.4%) and in the newspaper categories (61.1% and 57.1% in NDPs and NNPs, respectively), predominates the other global actions in CC. From the dominance of the global action of apprehension, it may therefore be plausible to point out that the political dimension taken in the apprehension of ‘perpetrators[suspects]’ of ND conflict, probably by deploying security officials in the region, has been the most preponderant control measure used by the successive Nigerian governments in tackling the issues in the discourse, which breed the conflicts.

Conversely, prosecution has the lowest distribution across (15.6%) and within (16.7% and 14.3%) the newspaper sets. The closest explanation for the weakness in the occurrence of this global action is the nature of apprehension of perpetrators in the discourse, which always involves a gun battle. The likelihood, politically, is that the arrested perpetrators may not get to the courts. This is further substantiated as the few local actions recorded on prosecution are dominated by the indictment of expatriate bunkerers, who are given their rights to fair hearing for international relation reasons. Incidentally, however, amnesty is the second-dominant global action after apprehension. Amnesty here, as pointed out elsewhere, is a preliminary control measure initiated by the Yar’Adua administration to address some of the issues in the conflict discourse. Every other Nigerian government considered (including that of Yar’Adua’s) has widely used apprehension. However, the NNPs (28.6%) seem to have paid more attention to the global action (amnesty) than the NDPs (22.2%). The possible explanation for this being that the amnesty programme was a national issue, and most NNPs had to queue in. Amnesty comes sparingly from the presidency, but the daily apprehension and prosecution do not need presidential approval.

The AS category is marked by three global actions; namely, ethnic clashes, rescue clashes, and reprisal clashes (henceforth, ethnic, rescue, and reprisal). Two things that these global actions have in common are the involvement of arms and the presence of violent contact between/among the opposing parties. Another point to be made here is that two major groups of participants are involved in the global actions: the FGN and its security officials, on the one hand, and ND insurgents and community

youths, on the other hand. Ethnic involves the (inter/intra) communal clashes among the various tribes in the ND region; rescue includes the various attacks undertaken (especially by the FGN security officials) to either set captives (soldiers, oil workers, government officials or their relatives, etc) free or to recover hijacked machineries; reprisal embraces the various attacks undertaken to avenge or repel attacks from the opposing sides. While the ND insurgent groups are found to dominate the vengeance dimension of the reprisal category, the FGN security officials do more of resisting direct attacks or kidnap attempts. The table below summarises the distribution of these global actions in our data sets:

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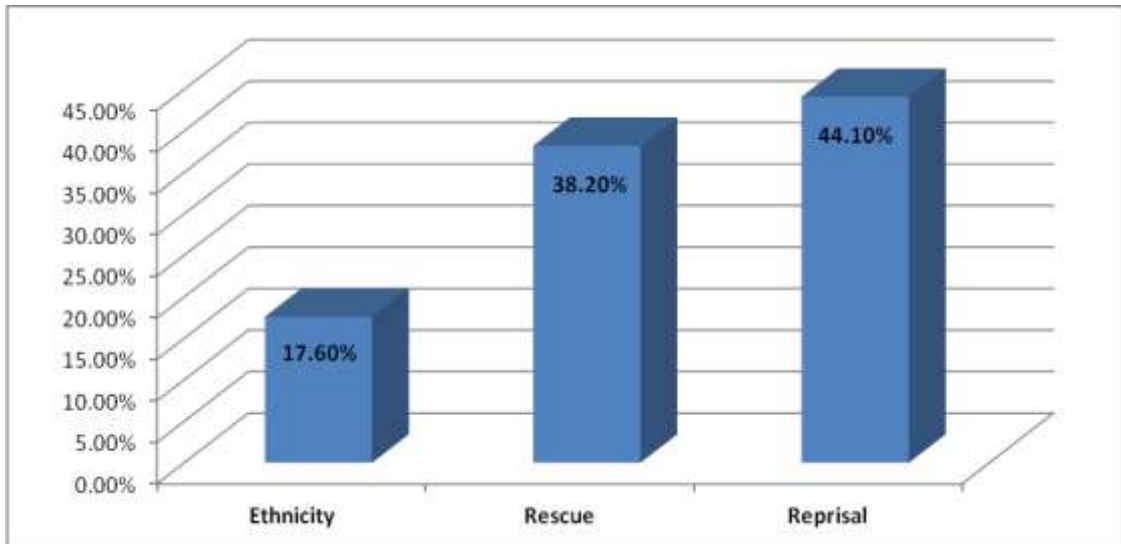
**Table 4.3.6: GLOACs in AS**

NDPs	Ethnic	Rescue	Reprisal	Average
<i>The Tide</i>		2	6	8 (40.0%)
<i>The Pointer</i>	1	1	3	5 (25.0%)
<i>Pioneer</i>	1	1	3	5 (25.0%)
<i>New Waves</i>	1	1		2 (10.0%)
Frequency Distribution	3 (15.0%)	5 (25.0%)	12 (60.0%)	20 (100%)
NNPs				
<i>The Guardian</i>	1	2		3 (21.4%)
<i>Vanguard</i>	1	1		2 (14.3%)
<i>THISDAY</i>		2	3	5 (35.7%)
<i>The Punch</i>	1	3		4 (28.6%)
Frequency Distribution	3 (21.4%)	8 (57.1%)	3 (21.4%)	14 (100%)
<b>Cumulative Distribution</b>	<b>6 (17.6%)</b>	<b>13 (38.2%)</b>	<b>15 (44.1%)</b>	<b>34 (100%)</b>

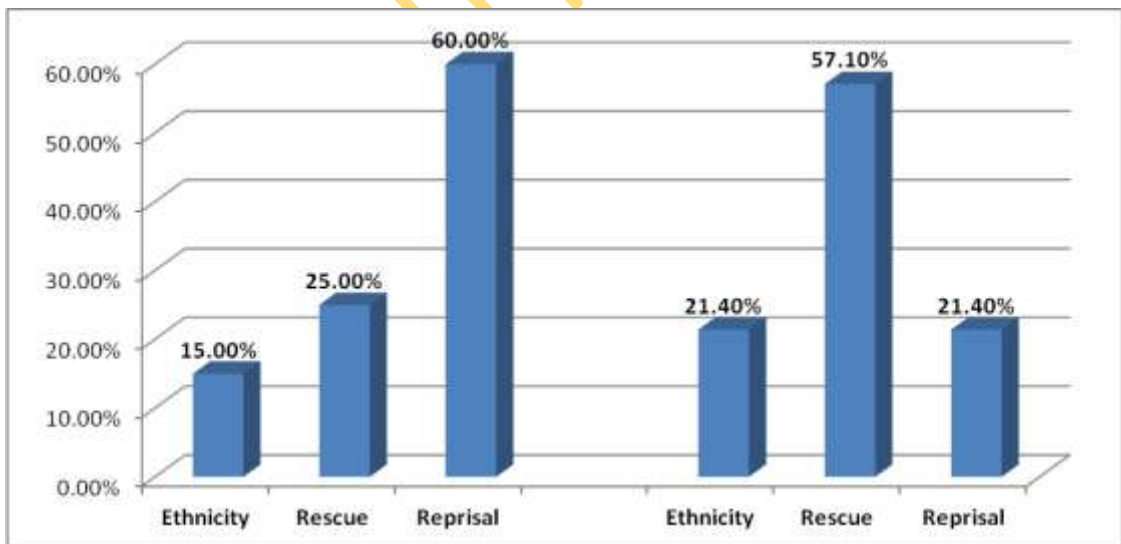
Table 4.3.6 displays the distribution of the global actions across the newspapers. Looking at the NDPs, *The Tide* (8: 40%) carries the highest percentage in the report of AS actions. The next-highest are *The Pointer* and *Pioneer* (with 5: 25% even), while *New Waves* (2: 10%) takes the lowest portion. In the NNP category, *THISDAY* (5: 35.7%), like in the DO and CC categories, dominates the entire reports. *The Punch* (4: 28.6%) is the next-dominant, closely followed by *The Guardian* (3: 21.4%), while *Vanguard* (2: 14.3%) takes the least fraction. Looking at vertical plane of the table, it is relevant to provide statistical charts of the frequency of each global action and the percentage distribution both across and within the respective newspaper sets:

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**Figure 4.3.6.1: GLOACs in AS**



**Figure 4.3.8.2: GLOACs of AS in NDPs and NNPs**



Figures 4.3.8.1. and 4.3.8.2 above illustrate the frequency distributions of the global actions across and within the newspaper categories, respectively. Going by the first chart – across the categories, reprisal (44.1%) dominates the other global actions in the AS. Rescue (38.2%) is not far from reprisal. However, ethnic (17.6%) is the least global action. The dominance of reprisal clashes here may not be unanticipated because, as we earlier mentioned, both the FGN security officials and the ND insurgents carry out reprisal attacks, unlike ethnic and rescue clashes that are dominated by the ND community youths and FGN security officials, respectively. Within the categories – as the second chart demonstrates, reprisal (60%) also preponderates in the NDP (left) side considerably. This is expectedly followed by rescue (25%), while ethnic (15%) carries the lowest proportion of the global actions. On the NNP (right) side, rescue (57.1%) incidentally prevails over reprisal, which equals with ethnic this time (with 21.4%). It can therefore be said that while the NDPs accommodate more of reprisal, the NNPs focus on rescue clashes. Does this trend have any political dimension? Do the NDPs strive to report the reprisal clashes and possibly the effects they have on the environment, livelihood, and psyche of the people in the region of which most of them (NDP reporters) are a part? Or do the NNPs make effort to cover rescue clashes to demonstrate to their wider readership (especially, those outside the ND region and beyond) that the FGN is not only really making excellent efforts to keep peace in the region, but also that the security officials are doing their job?

The HA category is typified by two global actions, *viz.* kidnap of individuals or group of individuals, and release of them (henceforth, kidnap and release, respectively). Kidnap covers the various cases of kidnapping, abduction, hostage taking and seizure of single or group of individuals either for money ransom or to press other demands. The ND insurgents and community youths dominate this line of actions. Release includes the gestures of setting captives free either through peaceful rescue missions or voluntarily by the captors to press other demands. The former option usually involves negotiation with government officials or respected ND community leaders, while the latter is carried out by the ND insurgent groups. The table below summarises the distribution of the global actions in the data sets:

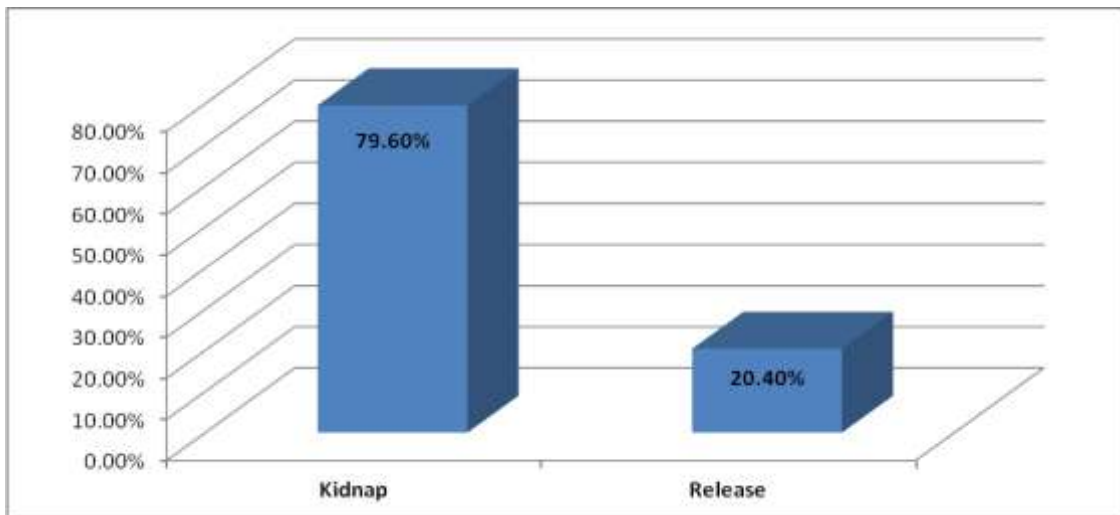


**Table 4.3.7: GLOACs in HA**

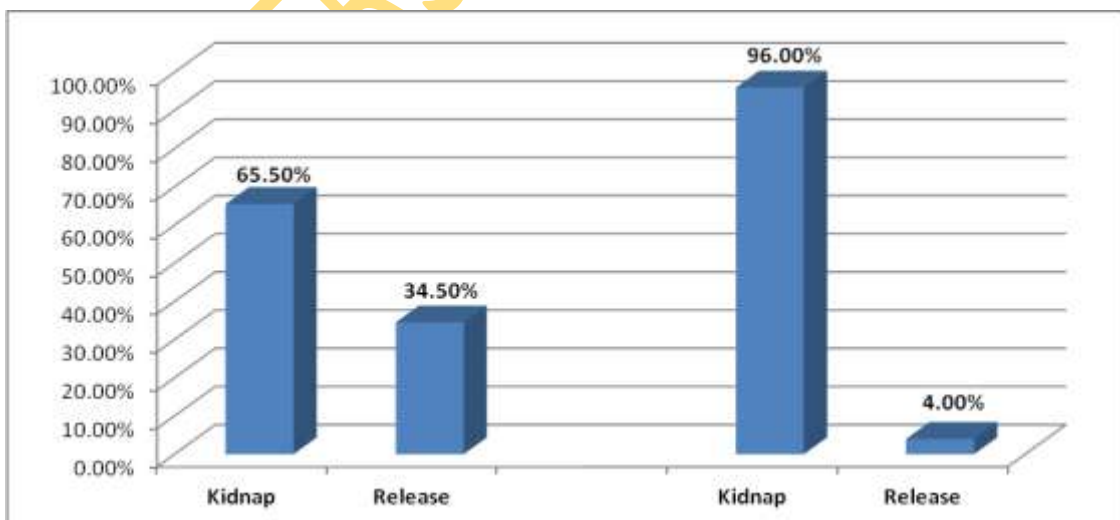
NDPs	Kidnap	Release	Average
<i>The Tide</i>	10	5	15 (51.7%)
<i>The Pointer</i>	1	2	3 (10.3%)
<i>Pioneer</i>	5	2	7 (24.1%)
<i>New Waves</i>	3	1	4 (13.8%)
Frequency Distribution	19 (65.5%)	10 (34.5%)	29 (100%)
NNPs			
<i>The Guardian</i>	7	1	8 (32.0%)
<i>Vanguard</i>	7		7 (28.0%)
<i>THISDAY</i>	6		6 (24.0%)
<i>The Punch</i>	4		4 (16.0%)
Frequency Distribution	24 (96.0%)	1 (4.0%)	25 (100%)
<b>Cumulative Distribution</b>	<b>43 (79.6%)</b>	<b>11 (20.4%)</b>	<b>54</b>

As the table shows in the report of the global actions making up the HA category, *The Tide* (with 15: 51.7%), by far, predominates the entire newspapers in the NDP category. Following it is *Pioneer* (with 7: 24.1%), and *New Waves* (with 4: 13.8%), while *The Pointer* (with 3: 10.3%) is found to take the least percentage. The dominance of *The Tide* here, like in the previous AS category, is probably due to its comparative consistency, especially with regard to the report of the conflict actions that occur in Rivers State, which is key player in terms of location of the conflicts. On the part of the NNPs, *The Guardian* (with 3: 32%) takes the pre-eminent proportion. The next-dominant is *Vanguard* (7: 28%), strictly followed by *THISDAY* (6: 24%), while *The Punch* (4: 16%) takes the least portion. Looking at the global actions on the perpendicular axis, the global action of kidnap prevails over that of release, both within the categories and across them. For a clearer view, the percentage distribution of the global actions within and across the newspaper categories is graphically illustrated on the charts below:

**Figure 4.3.7.1: GLOACs in HA**



**Figure 4.3.7.2: GLOACs of HA in NDPs and NNPs**



As the two charts show, kidnap dominates both within and across the newspaper categories. The overbearing trend of kidnap in the HA underscores what the ND region has been known with in recent times. This points to one fact; namely, both the global actions of kidnap and release involve conflict. This may also be one of the indicators of the relatively high incidence of rescue clashes in the AS category. In the second chart also, there is noticeably higher incidence of kidnap; that of the NNPs however dominates (with 65.5% as against 96%). The trend of release, on the other hand, is however higher in the NDPs (34.5% aligned with 4%). The high attention paid to kidnap (with a disproportionately low attention to release) by the NNP reporters may be akin to their higher focus on rescue over reprisal clashes in the AS category above. It may also follow here that the NNPs are more interested in showing the reader that the only global action in HA is kidnapping of the oil working personnel, and releasing them is always hinged on stringent demands. (The strategies through which this is done in the texts and their implications for the discourse are some of the objectives to be pursued, respectively, in the next chapter and the one that follows).

#### **4.3.1.2 Local action (LOCAC)**

The GLOACs identified above are in turn indexed by specific LOCACs. The LOCACs are realised through the conceptualisation of the actions contained in the lexical verbs involved from the reports. They are considered with regard to their frequency of occurrence in the data.

In Disruption of oil operation (DO), two categories of local actions are used to specify the global actions (vandalisation and interruption); they are general (cutting across both global actions) and typical (specific to each global action). The general (local) actions feature in the two global actions. Four of these types are identified; namely:

- ‘invading’ oil facilities (e.g. “Angry youths...invaded...flow stations” Text A16),
- ‘striking’ (e.g. “...militant groups struck again” Text A5),
- ‘attacking’ (e.g. “...the group attacked Shell’s...pipeline” Text A28), and
- ‘storming’ (e.g. “The angry Ijaw youths...stormed the flow station” Text A24).

These local actions are found to be in complementary distribution; where ‘invading’, for example, begins the string of local actions, ‘striking’ or ‘storming’ may not feature, and vice versa.

Within the specific category, the global action of vandalism, for example, is marked by four major local actions; they are:

- ‘vandalising’ (278: 40.9%; e.g. “...pipeline that runs through...has been *vandalised*” Text A8);
  - ‘blowing up’ (219: 32.2%; e.g. “...MEND...*blew up* a crude oil facility” Text A29);
  - ‘destroying’ (112: 16.5%; e.g. “...oil pipelines were...*destroyed* by militants” Text A1); and
  - ‘bombing’ (71: 10.4%; e.g. “...suspected militants...*bombed* the...area” Text A21).
- While ‘vandalising’ (40.9%) and ‘blowing up’ (32.2%) are observed to be recurrent in the data, ‘destroying’ (16.5%) and ‘bombing’ (10.4%) are not.

Interruption is typified by six categories of local actions:

- ‘seizing’ oil facilities (251: 27.6%; e.g. “...militants struck...*seizing* the...flow station” Text A25);
- ‘disrupting’ activities on them (78: 8.6%; e.g. “Youths...have *disrupted* the operations” Text A27);
- ‘taking over’ oil facilities (197: 21.6%; e.g. “The...flow station...was...*taken over* by militants” Text A15);
- ‘preventing’ access to them (61: 6.7%; e.g. “...youths from Egbeda...*prevent* an oil company” Text A12); and
- ‘shutting down’ operations in an oil facility (231: 25.4%; e.g. “...two communities stormed the...oil facilities...and *shut* it[sic] *down*” Text A17); and
- ‘closing down’ operations (92: 10.1%; e.g. “MEND...*closed down* Shell flow station” Text A6).

Seizing, taking over, and shutting down are, however, more frequently used local actions, while disrupting, preventing, and closing down are non-frequent in the reports. Table 4.3.8 below summarises the local actions identified with their respective global actions in DO:

**Table 4.3.8: LOCACs in DO**

s/ n	Global Action	Local Action		
		Typical		General
		Frequent	Non-frequent	
1	Vandalisation	vandalising,	destroying	attacking, invading, striking, storming
		blowing up	bombing	
2	Interruption	seizing	disrupting	attacking, invading, striking, storming
		taking over	preventing	
		shutting down	closing down	

In crime control (CC), the local actions identified and categorised on the basis of frequency of occurrence. Five local actions are found to reflect the global action of apprehension; they are:

- ‘arresting’ suspects (119: 35.8%; e.g. “...49 kidnappers have been *arrested*” Text B4),
- ‘parading’ (81: 24.4%; e.g. “...police command has *paraded* suspected arms dealer” Text B12),
- ‘smashing’ (17: 5.1%; e.g. “...Police Command...*smashed*...two kidnapping suspects” Text B11);
- ‘nabbing’ (67: 20.2%; e.g. “The suspects were *nabbed*...” Text B29); and
- ‘apprehending’ (48: 14.5%; e.g. “Four persons...have been *apprehended*...” Text B29).

While arresting and parading are the most recurrent local actions here; this is followed by nabbing and apprehending, while smashing is however the least frequent in the data. Nabbing and apprehending are, however, observed to be used synonymously with arresting suspects in the data.

Prosecution is realised by three local actions; namely:

- ‘arraining’ suspects (21: 34.4%; e.g. “Twenty five expatriates...were arraigned before the...High Court” Text B26);
- ‘convicting’ the suspects when guilty (31: 50.8%; e.g. “Twelve persons have...been convicted” Text B9); or otherwise
- ‘granting bail’ to the suspects (9: 14.8%; e.g. “Leader...(NDPVF)... has been granted bail” Text B16).

However, while ‘convicting’ and ‘arraining’ are recurrent in the data, ‘granting bail’ is found to be infrequent.

Five local actions characterise amnesty, *viz*:

- ‘meeting’ with amnesty officials (39: 24.1%; e.g. “...militant group...*met* President Umaru Yar’Adua” Text B13); and
- ‘surrendering’ of arms (31: 19.1%; e.g. “...militant commander...*surrendered* to the government” Text B1), which is used interchangeably with

- ‘dropping arms’ (19: 11.7%; e.g. “...63 of them have so far *dropped* their arms” Text B2),
- ‘laying down’ arms (45: 27.8%; e.g. “We...agree to *lay down* our arms...” Text B13), and
- ‘handing over’ weapons (28: 17.3%; e.g. “...thousands of guns were *handed over*” Text B21).

‘Laying down’, which is the most preponderant local action here, is observed to be used interchangeably with ‘surrendering’, ‘handing over’, and ‘dropping arms’. They, however, dominate ‘meeting’, which is used on limited occasions. Unlike in the DO category discussed above, no general local actions are found among the global actions here. The local actions in conflict control and their respective global actions are presented in the table below for clearer picture of their relations:



**Table 4.3.9: LOCACs in CC**

s/n	Global Action	Local Action	
		Frequent	Non-frequent
1	Apprehension	arresting, parading	nabbing, apprehending, smashing
2	Prosecution	arraigning, convicting	granting bail
3	Amnesty	surrendering, meeting,	dropping, handing over, laying down,

The local actions identified in armed struggle (AS) are categorised on two bases, namely, general/typical actions, and practical/resultant actions. The general category holds the local actions that are found in all the global actions; the typical are the ones that are specific to each global action. The practical category covers the local actions carried out by active participants, while the resultant ones are the effects of the practical actions. Three local actions have, therefore, been recognized in the general category – running across the global actions (reprisal, rescue and ethnic); they are:

- ‘storming’ the opposing side (e.g. “...security personnel *stormed* the area in search of...oil workers” Text C17);
- ‘exchanging’ of gunfire (e.g. “Navy gunboats *exchanged* fire with militants” Text C14); and
- ‘killing’ (e.g. “...one of the cult leaders...was reportedly *killed* in the gun battle” Text C9).

These local actions, as will be demonstrated below, cut across all the global actions in AS. Out of these, only ‘killing’ is resultant while the rest are of the practical category.

Among the typical category, the global action of reprisal is typified by three local actions, viz:

- ‘ambushing’ the enemies (16: 5.9%; e.g. “...the soldiers were *ambushed* by militants” Text C22);
- ‘shooting’ (211: 78.4%; e.g. “Naval personnel...*shot* dead five Ijaw youths” Text C28); and
- ‘razing’ their fort (42: 15.6%; e.g. “...militants *razed* two police station” Text C10).

‘Shooting’ is the local action most frequently used to specify the reprisal attacks in the discourse. ‘Ambushing’ and ‘razing’ are infrequent in the data. Here, only ‘razing’ is found to be resultant, while ‘ambushing’ and ‘shooting’ are practical.

Rescue is marked by three local actions, namely:

- ‘searching’ for captives (11: 14.9; e.g. “Navy divers are now said to be *searching* for the missing soldiers” Text C30);
- ‘rescuing’ (47: 63.5%; e.g. “...an agency...*rescued* a man...kidnapped by seven-man gang” Text C28); and

- ‘demolishing’ the hideout of captors (16: 21.6%; “The task force had *demolished* Camp 5” Text C30).

‘Rescuing’ clearly dominates both ‘searching’ and ‘demolishing’ in this global action. Here, unlike the local actions of reprisal above, there are no resultant local actions.

Two local actions are found to represent ethnic; they are:

- ‘burning’ houses (17: 58.6%; e.g. “a chief’s house was allegedly *burnt* down” Text C26);
- ‘wounding’ people (12: 41.4%; e.g. “those who went to rescue him were *wounded*” Text C26).

Although, the local actions here are all practical, they are generally not frequent. However, ‘burning’ houses is more frequently used than ‘wounding’ people. The local actions in the armed struggle and their respective global actions are summarised in the table below for clearer picture of their relations:

**Table 4.3.10: LOCACs in AS**

s/n	Global Action	Local Action			
		Typical (non-frequent)		General (frequent)	
		Practical	Resultant	Practical	Resultant
1	Reprisal	ambushing, shooting,	Razing	storming, attacking, exchanging,	killing
2	Rescue	searching,	rescuing, demolishing	storming, attacking, exchanging,	killing
3	Ethnic	burning,	wounding	storming, attacking, exchanging,	killing

In human abduction (HA), only two local actions are observed to cut across both global actions; they include:

- ‘shooting’ (e.g. “...the gunmen...*shot* the police escort dead.” Text D3);
- ‘killing’ (e.g. “Suspected...militants...killed two guards” Text D7).

In the typical category, five local actions are found to be representative of kidnap; they are:

- ‘maiming’ (7: 1.3%; e.g. “...two of the local security men were *maimed* in the attempt” D19));
- ‘hijacking’ (106: 20.4%; e.g. “...an affiliate group *hijacked* the MV Spirit” Text D11); and
- ‘kidnapping’ (162: 31.2%; e.g. “...the eleven-year old son...was *kidnapped* by militants” Text D30);
- ‘abducting’ (112: 21.6%; e.g. “An employee of Chevron...was *abducted*” Text D34); and
- ‘taking hostage’ (132: 25.4%; e.g. “...five workers...have been taken hostage” Text D45).

While ‘kidnapping’, ‘hostage taking’ and ‘abducting’ carry the highest percentage of the local actions used to specify the kidnap global action, they are also found to be used synonymously. They all dominate the other local actions, ‘hijacking’ and ‘maiming’.

Three local actions have been found typical of the release global action, namely:

- ‘releasing’ (40: 38.1%; e.g. “...little Margaret Hills...was *released* by captors” Text D17);
- ‘freeing’/ ‘setting free’ (41: 39.0%; e.g. “The...(JTF) has *freed* three toddlers...” Text D12); and
- ‘regaining freedom’ (24; 22.9%; e.g. “Six...oil workers...have regained their freedom.” Text D24).

‘Regaining freedom’ is, however, the least frequent in the data, although it is sometimes substituted for ‘freeing’ or ‘setting free’. The local actions identified here and their respective global actions are summarised in the table below for clearer picture of their relations:

**Table 4.3.11: LOCACs in HA**

s/n	Global Action	Local Action		
		Typical		General
		Frequent	Non-frequent	
1	Kidnap	kidnapping, abducting, taking hostage	maiming, hijacking	shooting, killing
2	Release	releasing, freeing	regaining freedom	Shooting, killing

#### 4.3.1.3 Lexical choices in LOCAC discourse

Three patterns of lexicalisation have been noticed with the DO actions, namely, collocations, non-technical vocabulary, lexical fields and verbs. Collocations abound in the data, which capture the actions themselves, and the news actors involved in them. The actions reflect a frequent occurrence of non-technical vocabulary, especially from the field of military encounter. Generally, the vocabulary items and companies they keep may sometimes be realised as lexical fields, expressing a particular semantic area of disruption or instantiating the actualisation of a particular purpose of disruption. Let us consider some examples:

##### **Excerpt 6**

The N30 billion Associated Gas Gathering Project (AGG) belonging to ... (SPDC) has been *shut down* by Ijaw youths from the seven host communities.

Similarly, five flow stations producing about 250,000 barrels per day located around the Gas project have also been forcefully *shut down* by the irate Ijaw youths.

The angry Ijaw youths ... *stormed* the flow station at about 5 am yesterday, *overpowered* the security agents and *took over* the five flow stations. (Text A24: *THISDAY* Jan. 29, 2001)

##### **Excerpt 7**

The coordinator of the state-security outfit ... confirmed the incident, militants *attacked* the facilities in 12 speed boats.

Our correspondent gathered that the militants *blew up* three major pipelines belonging to NAOC in the early hours of yesterday. (Text A3: *The Tide* May 9, 2007)

##### **Excerpt 8**

Angry youths of Kula community in Akuku-Toro Council of Rivers State yesterday *invaded* three flow-stations belonging to ... (SPDC) and *shut them down*.

(Text A16: *The Guardian* Oct. 6, 2006)

##### **Excerpt 9**

Amidst the relative calm that now prevails in Bayelsa State, militant groups have *struck* again at Ekeremor ... *destroying* two manifolds built by Shell ... at Agge and Agoro.

(Text A5: *The Tide* Mar. 8, 2006)

Two points can easily be made from the texts above in terms of vandalism and interruption, there is on the one hand the presence of physical damage on the oil facilities (“three major pipelines” and “two manifolds” in Excerpts 7 and 9); and on the

other, the lack of physical damage (on “Associated Gas Gathering Project” and “flow station” in Excerpts 6 and 8). Although not all the types of local action are represented in the texts, the available collocations “shut down” and “took over” (in Excerpts 6 and 8) belong to the global actions of interruption, while “blew up” (in Excerpt 7) and “destroying” (in Excerpt 9) reflect that of vandalism. However, while items like “blew up” and “shut down” fit into the frequent category, “destroying” belongs to the non-frequent category of the local actions. However, other lexical items like “stormed” (Excerpt 6), “attacked” (Excerpt 7), “invaded” (Excerpt 8), and “struck” (Excerpt 9) are local actions of the general category. As earlier highlighted, the local actions in this category cut across the two global actions, and more significantly, they introduce the other typical local actions. In this way, the general actions normally usher in a pattern of lexical field relation, which suggests ‘terms of disruption of oil operation’. Let us examine the following patterns of lexical fields observed with the texts above:

<b>LOCACs</b>		<b>GLOACs</b>
<b>General Action</b>	<b>Typical Action</b>	
Ex 1. stormed →	over powered → took over flow station →	Interruption
Ex 2. attacked →	blew up pipeline →	Vandalisation
Ex 3. invaded →	shut [flow stations] down →	Interruption
Ex 4. struck →	destroying manifolds →	Vandalisation

#### **Terms of disruption of oil operation**

The lexical verbs in the local actions are dominated by the material process, which further projects the field of military encounter they point to. For example, both the general and typical categories of local action in the lexical field pattern above, though not closed terminology of military encounter, suggest a kind of confrontation between the two opposing sides involved in an armed battle. (Terms of military encounter is peculiar to AS as will be buttressed below). The possible explanation for the switch to the military terms is, one, to probably present the magnitude of the conflict with respect to the issue at stake; and two, to exaggerate the local actions being reported.

Two lexical patterns have been identified with the CC action, namely, lexical chain and synonymy. The closest feature to the lexical fields identified in DO above is lexical similarity chain. However, as Neumann (2008: 97) clarifies, lexical fields are



mainly semantically based, while chains are analysed by the patterns lexical items build within a text. A lexical chain pattern of relationship is observed between the global actions of apprehension and prosecution and the local actions therein follow suit. Beside lexical chain, a frequent use of both “intratextual” and “intertextual” synonymy (Birch, 1989b: 149) is also observed. Let us examine these patterns in the texts that follow:

**Excerpt 10**

... Akwa Ibom State Command... the command on Thursday also *paraded* 20 victims and one suspected human trafficker *arrested* by them. (Text B10: *Pioneer* Jun. 25, 2007)

**Excerpt 11**

Four persons suspected to [sic] member of a syndicate ... have been *apprehended* by men of the Joint Task Force.

The suspects were *nabbed* Monday about noon during a routine stop and search... .

Parading the suspects at the Joint Military Task Force Headquarters in Opolo-Epie, the Commander ... said the suspects would be handed to the police command....

(Text B29: *Vanguard* Aug. 14, 2008)

**Excerpt 12**

Twelve persons have so far been *convicted* for human trafficking...

Aiyegbusi, who is NAPTIP's head of public enlightenment said the suspected traffickers had also been *charged* to courts.

(Text B9: *Pioneer* Nov. 19, 2007)

**Excerpt 13**

Twenty five expatriates and five others were yesterday *arraigned* before the Federal High Court....

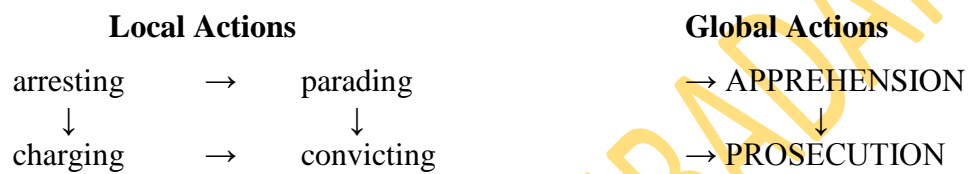
The accused, including 13 Russians, were among the 78 suspects *paraded* by the Inspector General of Police, Mr Tafa Balogun, last Thursday, in Abuja for their illegal involvement in the illicit trade.

Twelve of the suspects were *arraigned* before Justice Mohammed Shuaibu, five others were *charged* before Justice Marcel Awokulehin, while the 13 Russian nationals were arraigned before Justice G.C. Okeke.

(Text B26: *THISDAY* Mar. 3, 2004)

According to H&H (1989: 84), the items in a “similarity chain belong to the same general field of meaning, referring to (related/similar) actions, events, and objects and their attributes”. In the texts above, there is a manner in which the local

actions “arrested” and “paraded” (in Excerpt 10) are connected in a chain action, which reflects the experiential meaning expressed in their global action: apprehension. It goes to show that the one local action (arresting) is a sequel to the other (parading). The same lexical pattern occurs in Excerpt 11 with the local actions “apprehended” and “nabbed” (which, as earlier pointed out, are synonymous exponents of ‘arresting’) appearing as forerunners before the “parading” (in the last paragraph). These two lexically-related actions are also ‘chained’ to another set of local actions “convicted” and “charged” (in Excerpt 12), which in turn express the global action of prosecution. The lexical chain relation discussed so far is presented in the pattern below:



#### **Lexical similarity chain of apprehension and prosecution**

The lexical chain pattern mirrors the political issues in the ND discourse, where security officials do not charge arrested suspects to court without publicly showing (parading) them to the media. Another thing that quickly comes to the notice of the reader, as manifest in Excerpt 12 (as with many other instances in the data), is the extravagant employment of the local actions into synonymous sets. Consider such lexical items as “arraigned” (in the first paragraph) and “charged” (in the last); and of course, “illegal bunkering” and “illicit trade” (although our emphasis here is not on nominal entities yet). However, these are examples of intratextual synonyms: occurring within the same newspaper report. Other lexical items like “apprehended” and “nabbed” (in Excerpt 11) are intertextually synonymous with “arrested” (in Excerpts 10), which is in another newspaper report. They, therefore, logically come before “parade(d/ing)” in both excerpts.

It should, however, be stated here that, unlike those of the other social actions in the discourse, no systematic pattern has been observed with the global actions in AS (armed struggle: reprisal, rescue, and ethnic clashes). The possible explanation for this being that it may normally not be coherent to expect a line of action from an opposing side, which takes abruptness and surprise as advantageous moves. However, specifically like in the DO action where the general category of local actions are

recurrent, there is high frequency of the general (especially ‘exchanging’ gunfire/gun battle, and ‘attacking’) than the typical category of local actions here. These local actions, however, suggest technical vocabulary and metaphors from the domain of military combat. No local actions here could be said to be frequent. Some examples are relevant here:

**Excerpt 14**

Security operatives and members of Military Joint Task Force (JTF) early yesterday *launched an attack* at the Agip base in Ogboinbiri, Southern Ijaw ... of Bayelsa State where 11 oil workers and about 12 soldiers were held hostage since last week by militants, *killing* 12 militants.

(Text C11: *The Tide* Jun. 22, 2007)

**Excerpt 15**

Bayelsa and Rivers states witnessed fresh communal hostilities between last weekend and Monday, during which 40 people reportedly lost their lives, while an unspecified number of people were declared missing.

The crisis erupted on January 20, as a direct response to the stoppage of the town hall project. Armed youths were alleged to have terrorised the entire community, *kidnapping* and seriously *wounding* people.

The high point was when a chief was allegedly *kidnapped* in a church and tortured. Sources said all those who went to rescue him were overpowered and *wounded*.

(Text C32: *The Punch* Feb. 14, 2001)

**Excerpt 16**

The ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militants ... *broke down* yesterday when armed youths engaged men of the Joint Task Force on the Niger Delta (JTF) in a bloody battle.... (Text C26: *THISDAY* Mar. 31, 2006)

The news writer is also influenced by the swift and unexpected nature of the local actions here. That no specific pattern of lexicalisation is found among the local actions, apart from metaphors and technical vocabulary of the military, hinges on the fact that most of the attacks are not announced. In fact, the local actions found in the armed struggle also cut across the other social actions. For example, the local actions “launched an attack”, “killing” (in Excerpt 14), “kidnapping”, and “wounding”, as we will see below, are also found in HA. Others like “broke down” (in Excerpt 16) feature in DO.

Lexical field and synonymy are the major lexical patterns through which the experiential meaning expressed in the HA actions are realised. Of course, other varied local actions have been recognized (especially, with the global action of kidnap) to co-occur with the ones in the typical category. We cannot do but group them into different lexical fields with regard to the different steps in the realisation of the global action of kidnap. These diverse local actions, especially the typical ones, have been divided into two groups of lexical fields. They include: ‘terms of entering/locating the kidnap target’, and ‘terms of executing the kidnap’. Let us examine these patterns in the following excerpts from the data:

**Excerpt 17**

... a British oil worker, Mr. David Ward, was on Friday *kidnapped* on a busy street in the state capital, Port Harcourt. A witness ... said the gunmen might have *trailed* the expatriate to Mgbuoba before they *swooped* on him. ... the attackers *overtook* Ward’s vehicle and *ordered* the driver to stop while shooting sporadically in the air....  
... the kidnappers *surrounded* it, *forced* the door where the American [sic] sat open and *pushed* him into their waiting vehicle. (Text D4: *The Punch* Aug. 11, 2007)

**Excerpt 18**

Armed youths suspected to be Ijaws ... *stormed* the office of Delcon Engineering Company ... and *kidnapped* the company’s managing director, Mr. Godfrey Igboin. Narrating the development, a site engineer ... said the armed youths, numbering about eight, *arrived* in a boat ... immediately *disembarked* and *made for* the office....  
... It was gathered that an already perplexed Igboin was forcefully *dragged out* of his office ... *manhandled* ... after which he was *dragged along* the wet soil to their boat. The youths were said to have *over-powered* the company’s security personnel, when they made a desperate attempt to launch a counter attack.  
(Text D47: *the Guardian* Nov. 22, 1999)

**Excerpt 19**

An eleven-year old son of a top businessman in Port Harcourt, Master Chidi Nsirim, has been *abducted* by four unknown gunmen, *killed* police escort on the spot. Master Nsirim who was said to be driven to school ... were [sic] said to be *trapped* by the abductors....  
On success of trapping their movement, *forced* every person in the vehicle *down* and *shot* the police escort dead.  
(Text D3: *Pioneer* Apr. 9, 2008)

**Table 4.3.12: Lexical fields: terms of kidnap**

<b>Excerpt</b>	<b>Entering/Locating</b>	<b>Executing</b>	<b>Typical Local Action</b>
Ex 17	trailed,	overtook, swooped, ordered, surrounded, forced open, pushed	kidnapped
Ex 18	stormed, arrived, disembarked, made for	dragged out, manhandled, dragged along, over-powered	Kidnapped
Ex 19	Trapped	forced down, shot	abducted

Table 4.3.12 above gives a clearer illustration of the relations these local actions they have in the data. In the texts above, “kidnapped” (in Excerpts 17 and 18) and “abducted” (in Excerpt 19) are local actions of kidnap belonging to the typical category. Others like “trailed”, “ordered” (in Excerpt 17), “arrived”, “dragged out” (in Excerpt 18), “trapped”, “forced down” (in Excerpt 19), to mention but a few, are other local actions that co-occur with the typical ones in specifying the global action of kidnap. The local actions of release do not show any significant stylistic pattern.

#### **4.3.2 Participant role relations (PRR)**

Participants, in a any discourse, have different roles, and such roles may really affect, in van Dijk’s (2000: 22) terms, “the production and consumption of discourse”. The news reporter, as one of the participants, makes assumption of the reader’s understanding based on the knowledge they both possess of the nature of the social actions and actors involved in them. An analysis of the participants involved in the social actions is contingent on the roles they play with respect to global/local actions earlier identified. Thus, three major social participants have been identified in the ND conflict discourse; namely, ND activist groups; FGN, its agents and multinational oil companies; and the press and readers. Through these social roles, other relations such as interactional (account for the various participants involved in physical contact), communicative (account for the various production roles in institutional situations), and instrumental (account for the various entities (animate or inanimate) that are utilised for that actualisation of certain goals). The table below summarises our findings on the participant role relations with respect to the respective social actions in the discourse.

**Table 4.3.13: Participant roles in the ND conflict discourse**

Social Action	Participant Roles		
	ND Activist Group	FGN Group	The Press
<b>DO</b> Vandalisation	vandalisers, bombers, destroyers	oil facilities vandalised, bombed, destroyed	information-givers / seekers;
Interruption	seizers, preventers, invaders	oil facilities seized, invaded, oil workers prevented access	evaluators
<b>CC</b> Apprehension	arrested, paraded	paraders	information-givers / seekers;
Prosecution	Bailed, arraigned, prosecuted, guilty	Bail grantors, prosecutors,	persuaders
Amnesty	Arms droppers,	arms collectors,	
<b>AS</b> Reprisal	Shooters, ND activists shot	security agents shot, shooters	information-givers / seekers; persuaders
Rescue	camps demolished	searchers/located, demolishers, resuers/rescued	information-givers / seekers; evaluators
Ethnic	wound- inflictors/wounded		information-givers / seekers; persuaders
<b>HA</b> kidnap	hijackers, kidnappers, captors	oil facilities hijacked, oil workers kidnapped, captives	information-givers / seekers; evaluators
Release	freedom givers	captives freed, released	information-givers / seekers; manipulator

Table 4.3.13 shows a categorisation of the different participant roles observed in the data. This categorisation is done across the four social actions earlier discussed. The table does not only show the participants and their roles, it also hints an array of relations amongst the roles. The participant roles will be discussed in sequence.

Two role relations have been identified through which the participants in the conflict discourse engage in their respective local actions. They are: interactional and communicative role relations.

#### **4.3.2.1 Interactional role relations**

Almost all the NDPs and *The Guardian* (which is a national newspaper) concentrate on the interactional role relations of the participants. In the DO action, there is predominantly one interactional role found, that is, the ND insurgent groups that are involved in vandalising oil facilities and interrupting oil services. Of course, there are other participants here (e.g. the oil facilities that are vandalised, etc), but they are categorised under Instrumental Role Relations below. There are observable instances of over-lexicalisation in terms of describing the different roles played by the major participant; for example, lexical items like “gunmen” (Text A7), “unknown gunmen” (Text A2), “suspected gunmen” (Text A1); “militants” (Text A3), “Nigerian militants”, “militant group” (Text A5, A6); “vandals” (Text A10), “suspected pipeline vandals” (Text A11), point to the participant roles identified in terms of ‘vandals’, ‘destroyers’, ‘bombers’, etc.

In CC, two broad interactional roles are identified as cutting across the global actions of amnesty, apprehension, and prosecution; they are: ND insurgent groups versus government officials. In the case of amnesty, it is between the ND groups (as ‘arms droppers’) and government (amnesty committee) officials (as ‘arms collectors’); for apprehension, their roles respectively change to suspects of such crimes as vandalism, kidnapping, human trafficking (as ‘arrested’, ‘paraders’, etc) and such FGN groups as the police, army, Immigration, NAPTIP (as ‘paraders’, etc). With regard to prosecution, we found the set of participants, this time, accused persons (as ‘guilty’, ‘the prosecuted’, ‘the arraigned’, etc) versus FGN courts or judges (as ‘prosecutors’, ‘bail grantors’, etc), respectively. Lexicalisation is reduced here in that the lexical choices are constrained to the conventional terms given to these participant



roles in the local actions. Let us examine some of these interactional roles in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 20**

The *suspects* who were brought to courts in chains by officials of the *State Security Service* (SSS) ... are facing three-count charge....

In *the court charge* FHC/PH/124C/2006, the *suspects* were *accused* of forcefully taken into their custody ... Mr. Jarle Johnson, Roger Bjerkas, Alexander Nykhaelets and Timolei Belovs. (Text B20: *The Guardian* Jan. 1, 2007)

The actions in the text above belong to the CC category. Two interactional role relations are captured: the “suspect” versus the “SSS” officials, on the one hand, and the “accused” versus the judge, on the other. While the suspect and the security officials relate to the global action of apprehension, the accused and the judge are of prosecution. The suspect and accused are one and the same person; although the security and the legal officials differ, they belong to the broader interactional role of government officials.

In AS, the global action of ethnic clash demarcates the interactional roles into two groups of community youths that are engaged in the tribal wars. The global actions of rescue and reprisal clashes, however, have similar interactional roles; they are between the ND insurgent groups (as ‘shooters’ and getting ‘shot’) and the FGN security officials (as ‘shooters’ and getting ‘shot’). While the ND groups play their role mainly to attract the government and the multinational oil companies’ attention to their quest, the security officials engage themselves in repelling the attacks and rescuing the kidnapped victims. Again, there is a wealth of lexical choices made in describing these role relations. Some examples are important here:

**Excerpt 21**

*Unknown gunmen* yesterday unleashed terror in Bonny Island ... leaving five policemen ... dead in their trail.

...the attack started in the early hours of the morning as the *attackers* besieged the police station....

(Text C8: *The Tide* Apr. 28, 2008)

**Excerpt 22**

*The Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation restore Hope*... said that the number of its men missing ... had risen to 18. (Text C2: *Midweek Pioneer* May 27, 2009)

In Excerpt 21, the descriptions “unknown gunmen” and “attackers” refer to the same ND insurgent group, while “The Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta” and “Operation restore Hope” (in Excerpt 22) go to the security officials. These two groups of participants attract the names because of the roles they play in the discourse. The “unknown gunmen” attacked and are labelled attackers. The security officials, on the other hand, have the mandate to keep peace (i.e. restore hope) in the region; hence, they are dubbed “Operation Restore Hope”. Finally, in the HA, two interactional roles are identified in the global action of kidnap, namely: ND insurgents groups (as ‘hijackers’, ‘kidnappers’, ‘captors’, etc) against the FGN oil workers and their facilities (as ‘hijacked’, ‘kidnapped’, ‘captives, etc). These roles are akin to the one found with the AS action.

#### **4.3.2.2 Communicative role relations**

Evidence in the data shows that both the NDPs and NNPs represent the communicative role relations of the participants. Communicative role relations, as used here, covers the role relations which are directly or indirectly affected by or attracted to the social actions, and (hence) provide information on the local actions carried out by the participants. The communicative role relations bifurcate into the information-giving role and the information-seeking role. The information-giving role relates to participants who provide information on the social actions. Two divisions have further been observed with the information-giving participant roles; they are immediate and distant informers. The immediate information-giving roles relate to such participants as eye-witnesses, correspondents on ground, etc. The distant information-giving roles affect authoritative participants, who can either be adding information (e.g. Police Public Relations Officers; Police, Army, Immigration, spokesmen, MEND e-mail, etc.) or confirming the information (e.g. Police Commissioners, Governors, MEND e-mail, etc.). The information-seeking roles fit such participants as the various newsmen interested in the social actions, and strive to get the information by, for example, calling or visiting the distant information-giving participants, and/or getting first-hand information from the immediate informers. Therefore, in the data and according to Table 4.3.13, the two broad categories of communicative roles are represented in all the social actions discussed. Let us examine some examples:

### **Excerpt 23**

The traditional ruler of Rumuolumeni, Ndubueze who was yesterday abducted in his house by unknown gunmen.

*Spokesman* of Joint Task Force and *army PRO* in the state Lieutenant Col. Sagi Musa *confirmed* the development. Another *security source said* about eight heavily armed men stormed the traditional ruler's house....

...

The state *commissioner of Police*, Mr. Balla Hassan, said the Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro ordered their promotion. (Text D38: *Vanguard* Aug. 1, 2008)

### **Excerpt 24**

Out of the persons confirmed dead yesterday, six were militants while the other four persons were policemen.

According to an eye witness account, the four policemen that were killed in the clash were made up of an inspector, a sergeant, a constable and one other whose rank could not be ascertained.

Our source disclosed that shooting started from Hotel Presidential.... (Text C16: *The Pointer* Jan. 2, 2008)

In the text above, while such participants as “spokesman” of JTF, “security source”, and “commissioner of Police” play a distant information-giving communicative role in the actions reported (in Excerpt 23), others like “eye witness” and “our source” (in Excerpt 24) belong to the immediate information-giving role. However, within the distant category, “spokesman” of the JTF (“confirmed”) is the information-confirming sub-category, while “security source” and “commissioner of Police” (“said”) relate to the information-adding sub-category.

#### **4.3.4 Setting (SETT)**

SETT here includes the location, day and time of occurrence of the social actions. According to Ayoola (2010: 17), an understanding of the issues in ND conflict discourse is largely hinged on the situational and temporal dimensions of the analysis of the activities in the discourse. Thus, two broad locations have been identified in the conflict discourse, namely, oil-production area and residential area. Oil-production area includes the locations where oil is produced. They bifurcate into oil-exploration (OEx) area where crude oil is tapped, and oil-servicing (OSv) area where oil is refined. Residential area embraces locations where the participants live after the social actions. They trifurcate into urban (Ub), rural (Ru) and creek (Ck) areas. These locations convey special nuances of meaning to readers who may (not) be familiar with the

discourse. Table 4.3.14 below summarises our findings on the setting of the global actions across the four social actions in the discourse. The table is divided into the four social actions (DO, CC, AS, and HA) identified in the discourse, displays a distribution of the locations of the global actions within and across the newspaper categories. The first column lists the newspaper categories, NDPs and NNPs. The following three columns represent the global actions (each split into five: Ub, Ru, Ck, Osv, and Oex, signifying the five locations identified above). Below each social action is the frequency and percentage distribution of the respective global actions across the locations.

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**Table 4.3.14: Locations of GLOACs**

	Ub	Ru	Ck	Osv	Oex	Ub	Ru	Ck	Osv	Oex	Ub	Ru	Ck	Osv	Oex
<b>DO</b>	<b>Vandalisation</b>					<b>Interruption</b>									
NDPs		3	4	1			3	2	1						
NNPs		2	4	3		1	2	2	2						
Cumulative		5 (29.4%)	8 (47.1%)	4 (23.5%)		1 (7.7%)	5 (38.5%)	4 (30.8%)	3 (23.1%)						
<b>CC</b>	<b>Amnesty</b>					<b>Apprehension</b>					<b>Prosecution</b>				
NDPs	2	1			1	6		4	2		2				
NNPs		2		2		1	3	2	2		2				
Cumulative	2 (6.3%)	3 (9.4%)		2 (6.3%)	1 (3.1%)	7 (21.9%)	3 (9.4%)	6 (18.8%)	4 (12.5%)		4 (12.5%)				
<b>AS</b>	<b>Ethnic</b>					<b>Rescue</b>					<b>Reprisal</b>				
NDPs			3				2	2	1		1	3	2	6	
NNPs		1	2				2	6				1	2		
Cumulative		1 (2.9%)	5 (14.7%)				4 (11.8%)	8 (23.5%)	1 (2.9%)		1 (2.9%)	4 (11.8%)	4 (11.8%)	6 (17.6%)	
<b>HA</b>	<b>Kidnap</b>					<b>Release</b>									
NDPs	5		3	10		3	2	4	1	1					
NNPs	6		7	10			2		Abj						
Cumulative	11 (20.4%)		7 (13.0%)	3 (5.6%)	20 (37.0%)		3 (5.6%)	4 (7.4%)	4 (7.4%)	1 (1.9%)					

**Figure 4.3.14.1: Frequency distribution of locations of vandalism and interruption**

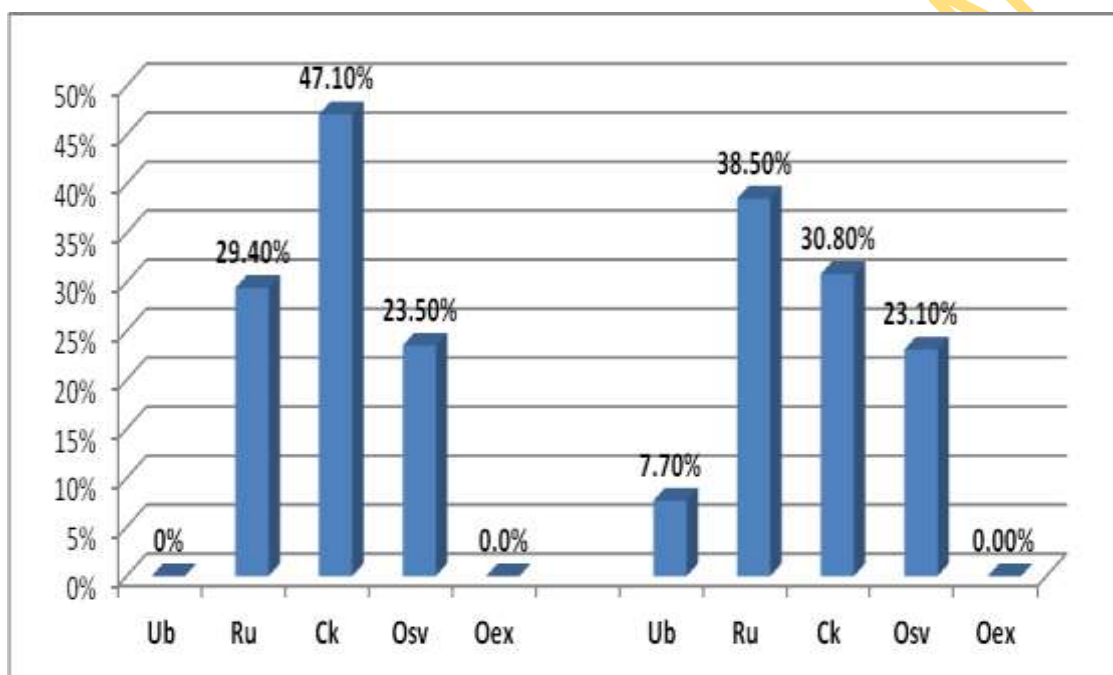
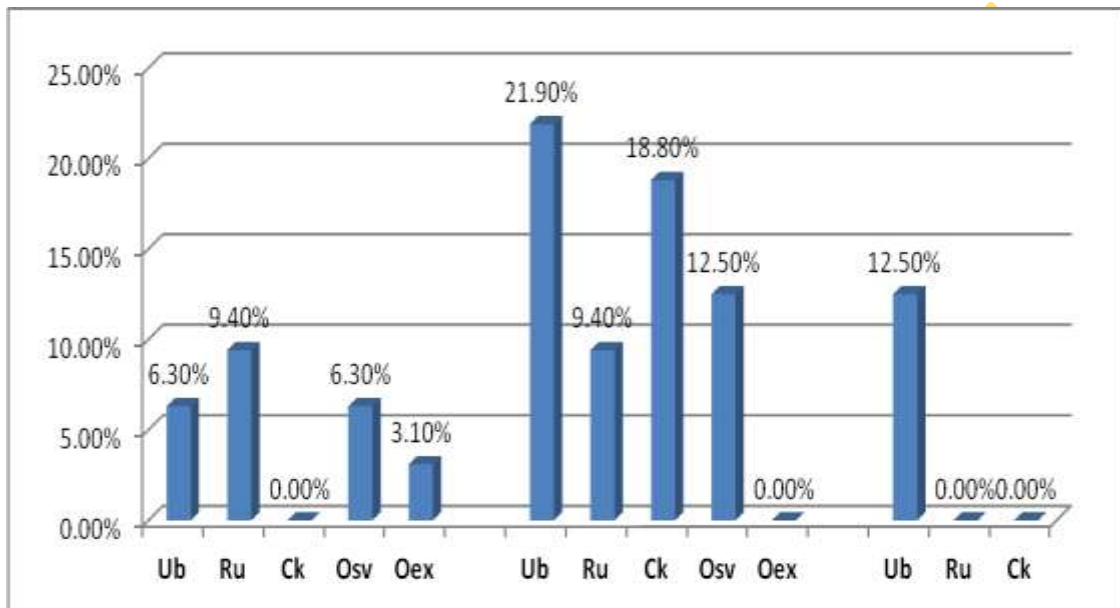


Figure 4.3.14.1 pictures the locations of DO. It shows that, cumulatively, the creek area (47.1%) witnessed the highest occurrences of vandalism, while the rural area (38.5%) experienced the utmost incidence of interruption of the oil facilities located in/around them. The trend is, however, reversed in the second positions, with the rural (29.4%) and creek (30.8%) areas recording the next-highest occurrences of vandalism and interruption actions, respectively. Oil-servicing area (32.5% and 23.1%, in the order of the table) had the penultimate portion in the two global actions, while the urban area did not experience any case of vandalism, except for interruption (7.7%). It could be said, therefore, that the social actions bordering on disruption of oil operation predominantly centred on the creek and rural areas. This may not be surprising as both areas, of course followed by the oil-exploration area, experience the worst ecological issues amongst the entire locations. Let us compare our findings here with that of the CC action below:

**Figure 4.3.14.2: Frequency distribution of locations of amnesty, apprehension and prosecution**



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Figure 4.3.14.2 presents a percentage distribution of the locations of the three global actions (amnesty, apprehension, and prosecution) in CC across the ND locations. As the table illustrates in corroboration of an earlier point, the bulk of the actions in this category centres on apprehension (*viz.* arresting and parading suspects). In fact, the least percentage (9.4%) of apprehension witnessed by the rural area is about the highest in the other global actions. The highest portion (21.9%) of this apprehension occurred in urban area. The creek area becomes the next where apprehension ranked high, which is followed by oil-servicing area (12.5%). That apprehension loomed large in the urban area can be tallied with the high presence of FGN security agents (e.g. JTF) in such area to prevent breakdown of law and order in the states' capitals. Conversely, the low occurrence of apprehension in rural area, despite the fact that it dominates in the DO, is particularly interesting. This may be due to the topography of the area. The bulk of the suspects' (ND insurgents) hideouts is in the rural and creek areas, where the security agents are hardly familiar with.

On the left side (from apprehension) of the chart is the global action of amnesty. Here, the rural area (9.4%) topped the chart; followed by the oil-servicing and urban areas, which are on level pegging (with 6.3%), while the oil-exploration area witnessed the least. That the rural area dominated the other areas means that the militants from this area (especially in Bayelsa State) yielded more to President Yar'Adua's amnesty programme than those in the other locations. This is not unexpected by virtue of the fact that the then vice president and current president of the country, Dr. Goodluck E. Jonathan, is from the state. The turnout for the amnesty may, therefore, be regarded as a mark of respect (for their 'son' who feels their self-determinationist struggle) and confidence that some of the issues in the discourse will be resolved. It was in this connection that one of the amnesty yields occurred at the presidential villa in (FCT) Abuja, where the 'repented' militants were made to meet with the president and his vice. Let us consider the text that follows:

**Excerpt 25**

Members of the main militant group in the Nigeria's Niger Delta met President Umaru Yar'Adua yesterday after accepting the amnesty offer....

Thirty-two members of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) ... met Yar'adua at the presidential villa in the capital Abuja.

"On the issues that gave rise to the militancy and the agitations, we will collectively look at them and solve them ..." Yar'Adua said, shaking the men's hands.

(Text B13: *New Waves* Jun. 6, 2008)

The headquarters of MEND, as we shall see presently in Table 4.3.14, is of course a rural village in Bayelsa State, which translates to the fact that the militants that surrendered directly to the president were from the same state with the then vice president. Every other surrendering of arms in any other locations covered in the data was handled in the states involved by amnesty committee members. On the right side of the chart, only the urban area (12.5%) witnessed the four cases of the prosecution, out of which the Federal High Courts in Abuja tried three while that of Lagos State heard one. And as the table shows, both the NDPs and NNPs reported the cases. Although these were suspects arrested in the ND region (involving three cases of illegal bunkering and one case of security threat to the country), the jurisdictions of the cases went beyond the ND region. Let us consider the next chart on AS:

**Figure 4.3.14.3: Frequency distribution of locations of ethnic, rescue and reprisal**

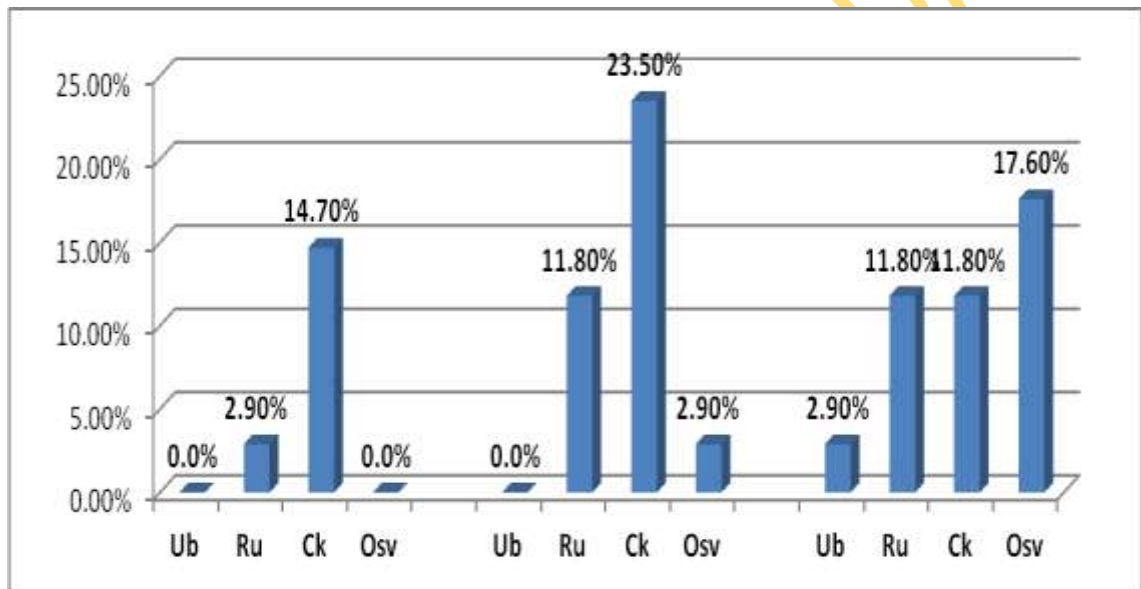


Figure 4.3.14.3 presents a percentage distribution of the locations of the three global actions (ethnic, rescue, and reprisal) in AS across the ND locations. One noticeable thing here is that the oil-exploration area did not bear the global actions at all. In the middle of the chart – rescue specifically, the creeks (23.5%) had the highest occurrence of rescue clashes; followed by the rural area (11.8%), then the oil-servicing area (2.9%). The two area (creek and rural) also had the highest experience of ethnic clashes, which is not surprising because the ND insurgents keep their captives far away in the creek or rural areas. The urban area (in these three global actions) maintained its trend of no or low occurrence. A slightly different trend is shown on the right side of the chart, where the oil-servicing area (17.6%) had more occurrences of reprisal clashes than the creek and rural areas, which are on level pegging (with 11.8%). This is probably because the FGN security agents are found to always repel the ND insurgents whenever they visit the oil installations to disrupt operations or kidnap oil workers. On the aggregate, however, the creeks seemed to have dominated in AS, because it tops the chart in all the global actions but reprisal. Expectedly, the rural area is the next-dominant across the global actions. The dominance of these locations may also fall in line with their ascendancy in DO and (as we shall see below) HA. The next chart on HA will substantiate this claim:

**Figure 4.3.14.4: Frequency distribution of locations of kidnap and release**

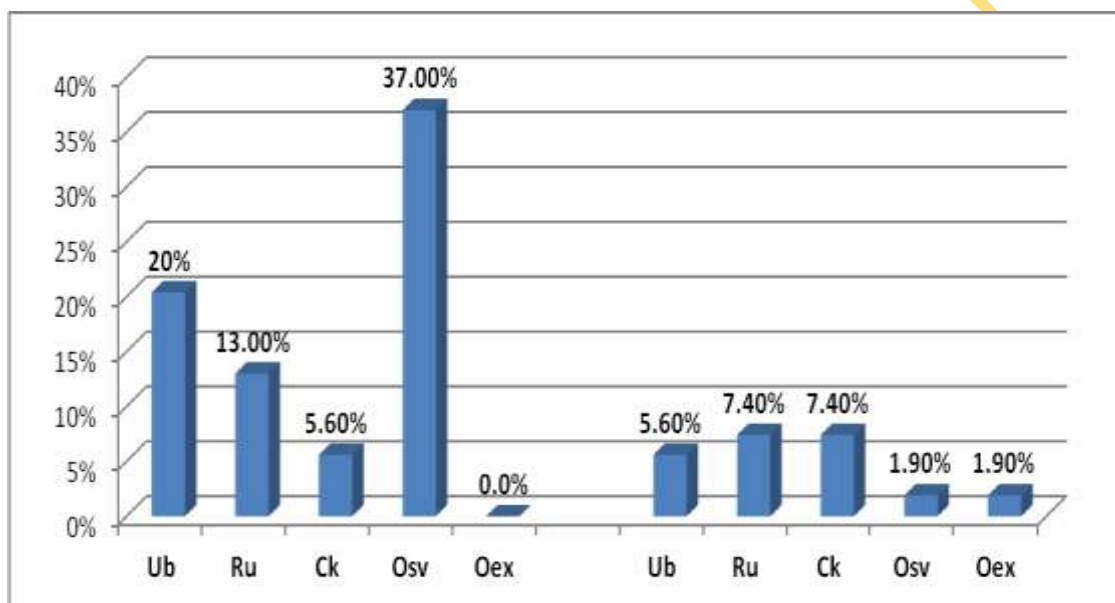


Figure 4.3.14.4 shows a percentage distribution of the locations of the two global actions (kidnap and release) in HA across the locations. On the left side of the chart – kidnap, the oil-servicing area (37.0%) had the most of kidnap. The urban (20.4%) and rural (13.0%) areas (in that order) also recorded high cases of this global action. The creeks (5.6%) had the least cases of kidnap, which seems to have logically motivated it as the highest location of release (7.4%), because as earlier confirmed that is where captives are kept and released from. On the right side – release, the creeks (7.4%), this time equalled the rural area, also had the highest experience, and then followed by the urban area (5.6%), while the oil-exploration area (1.9%) witnessed one case. Another location (FCT – Abuja: 1.9%) was also found, where one of the releases had to occur at the special involvement of the president. Let us consider an excerpt from the story:

**Excerpt 26**

The four oil workers taken hostage by some militant youths in the Niger Delta have been released by their captors.

President Olusegun Obasanjo ... formally received the released hostages in his office yesterday....

The president also advised the media not to sensationalise criminal conduct, noting that such act can heighten the issue of insecurity in the country....

Chief Obasanjo commended the committee headed by the Bayelsa State Governor, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, which was mandated to explore means of releasing the hostages for a job well done. (Text D25: *The Tide* Jan. 31, 2006)

The text above exposes one of the rescue means (apart from apprehension of suspects) that the previous Nigerian governments had taken to control the menace of kidnap in the country, which started as far back as Obasanjo's (1999-2007) tenure. And till this day, the global action of kidnap is still raging like wide fire, and has even gone beyond the shores of the ND; yet the problem is yet to be tackled. Of significant importance to the analysis are some recurrent locations in the data where the social actions occurred. This sub-category of the context is fairly universal in that there could be an overlap in the occurrence of more than one social action in the same location, but effort was made here to examine the peculiarities of each location with regard to the activities that took place in them. A table is relevant here to group the locations according to their respective states.

**Table 4.3.15 Locations of SOACs in ND states**

<b>Social Activity</b>	<b>Locations in ND States</b>			
<b>DO</b>	<b>Akwa Ibom</b>	<b>Bayelsa</b>	<b>Delta</b>	<b>Rivers</b>
Vandalisation		Oproma (A6), Olugbobiri (A25)	Okuntun (A18), Ughelli (A11)	P'Harcourt (A27)
Interruption	Eket (A22)	Brass (Text A1), Yenagoa (A26)	Funiwa (A14), Warri (A7),	Bonny (Text A4), Idu Oboisiukwu & Osobile (A17)
<b>CC</b>				
Amnesty	Uyo (B2), Ukanafun (B3)	Yenagoa (B1)	Warri (B29)	Okrika (B21), Ogoni (B30)
Apprehension	Umo Uko (B5), Eket (B19)	Ekeremor (B24)	Udu (B28), Burutu (B17),	Nchia (B18), P'Harcourt (B15)
Prsecution	Lagos (B9)	Abuja (B16)		P'Harcourt (B20)
<b>AS</b>				
Ethnic		Kolokuma (C32)	Ijaw/Itshekiri (C23), Ogbe Ijoh (C1)	Eleme (C32)
Rescue		Ogboinbiri (C11), Ogbotobo (C17)	Escravos (C24), Chanomi Creek (C14)	
Reprisal	Eket (C4)	Ologbobiri (C28), Nembe (C12)	Cawthron Channel (C22), Oporoza (C30),	Krakrama (C6), Bundu (C9)
<b>HA</b>				
Kidnap	Ikot Ekpene (D1), Eket (D7)	Oporoma (D17), Ekeremor (D23)	Okerenkoko (D11), Warri (D32)	P'Harcourt (D3), P'Harcourt (D5)
Release	Ikot Ekpene (D2),	Abuja (D25), Yenagoa (D54)		Kaa (D12), P'Harcourt (D14)

It is clearly confirmed again in Table 4.3.15 that Delta and Bayelsa states are home to most of the locations of the actions. The DO action, for example, dominantly centred on Delta and Bayelsa states; hence, the many locations of these actions recorded in the states. However, from our analysis, we discover that while the locations in Delta State witnessed more vandalism, the locations in Bayelsa State experienced more interruption. And the same dominance of interruption is also observed in Rivers and Akwa Ibom states. In the CC action, the locations in Akwa Ibom State (Uyo, Ukanafun, Eket, etc) were well represented as well as the cases that were tried in Abuja and Lagos. This corresponds to our earlier finding about Akwa Ibom's fair attention to security. Delta and Bayelsa do not generally have many locations in the CC action, while Rivers has a number of locations, especially in terms of amnesty (Okrika and Ogoni) and apprehension (Nchia and Port Harcourt). For the AS action, the bulk of the locations centres on Bayelsa (Ogboinbiri, Ogbotobo, Ologbobiri, etc) and Delta (Escravos, Chanomi Creek, Oporoza, etc). Rivers follows with Eleme, Krakrama, Bundu, as some of the locations. Akwa Ibom records only Eket as the location for a reprisal clash. Finally, in the HA action, again Bayelsa and (this time) Rivers States have many locations represented. Particularly in terms of kidnap, the location 'Port Harcourt' (Rivers State) experienced the most. Akwa Ibom State has few locations dominated by Eket and Ikot Ekpene.

Most of the locations here are found to be predominantly Ijaw communities. The Ijaw particularly, spread across Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers states, are found to be the leading ND tribe not only in the quest, but also in ethnic and inter-ethnic clashes. Hence, 'Ijaw youths' becomes a frequent word in the data (which is almost synonymous with 'militants' or 'militant youths'), and their communities recurrent locations of ND conflicts (cf. in Ayoola 2008, 2010; Ushie 2008). Such regular locations as Tebidaba, Ekeremor, Kulukuma, Oporoma, Ikibiri, Ogboinbiri, Olugbobiri (in Southern-Ijaw LGA), Brass, Nembe, Yenagoa (in Bayelsa State), Warri (especially Warri-South LGA), Okerenkoko, Funiwa, and Escravos (in Delta State), are Ijaw communities. These communities do not only bear the oil facilities (e.g. flow stations, manifolds, rigs, pumps, etc.), but also the oil activities (ranging from those of exploration, refining, to those of distribution). Some of these communities and the social actions going on in them are captured in the following excerpts from the data:



**Excerpt 27**

Violence resurfaced in the Niger Delta region at the weekend when an oil pipeline was blown up by some aggrieved youths.

The pipeline vandalism took place at Okuntun, a riverside settlement between Odimodi and Ogulagha, in Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State. The vandals were believed to have used explosives suspected to be dynamites.

(Text A18: *THISDAY* Jan. 4, 2009)

**Excerpt 28**

Suspected militants struck afresh yesterday in Bayelsa State, seizing the Tebidaba flow station in the Southern Ijaw local government area [sic] belonging to the Italian oil giant, Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC).

It was gathered that the attack on the facility located between the riverine settlement of Olugbobiri and Ikibiri in the swamp of the Southern Ijaw local government occurred in the early hours.

(Text A25: *Vanguard* Nov. 7, 2006)

**Excerpt 29**

Two communities in Rivers State, Idu Obosiukwu and Osobile have shut down oil facilities belonging to Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC), alleging employment marginalization.

(Text A17: *The Guardian* Sep. 3, 2005)

**Excerpt 30**

It would be recalled that youths from the Eket community staged a protest at Mobil's Qua Iboe Terminal (QIT) where the company produces more than 600,000 bpd of oil and condensates. (Text A22: *THISDAY* Mar. 11, 2006)

Going by the DO action alone, one note that will be easily taken from the texts above is that while the Delta State community of Okuntun (in Excerpt 27) witnessed the global action of vandalism, others in Bayelsa (Olugbobiri and Ikibiri in Excerpt 28), Rivers (Idu Obosiukwu and Osobile in Excerpt 29), and Akwa Ibom States (Eket; in Excerpt 30) experienced interruption. This corroborates an earlier finding about the prevalence of vandalism in Delta as against the reverse trend found in the other states.

The time of occurrence is another contextual variable that is important to the understanding of the issues related to the ND conflict discourse. One remarkable thing is that nearly all the actions were found to occur in the early hours of the morning or in the night. On the contrary, most of the CC actions take place during the day time. Only very few reports did not instantiate the time of occurrence; but this can only be

presupposed from the knowledge of the nature of social actions and the participants involved. Let us reproduce some of the excerpts above, especially the parts that situate the actions in the time of occurrence:

Excerpt 6 “...about 5 am yesterday” (Text A24: *THISDAY* Jan. 29, 2001)

Excerpt 21 “...in the early hours of the morning” (Text C8: *The Tide* Apr. 28, 2008)

It may not be far to seek why these action are carried out in the early mornings or in the dark. However, on the part of the newspaper reporters, two effects are observed in the lexical choices made in the reports. One, because the time of occurrence does not allow the reporter to witness the actions, they rely so much on communicative sources: eye-witnesses and confirmations from information-giving communicative participants (*viz.* the security or health authorities concerned). For the critical reader, this could bring worry as to how the news reporters describe the interactional roles of the participants even when, most of the time, the reporters do not witness the events. Secondly, the timing also affects the time or even the day of reporting the events. The over-reliance on sources and lack of immediacy are clearly seen in some of the choices made in the text that follows:

**Excerpt 31**

Trouble started on Monday November 8, according to Hon. Jude Elechi representing Unuapy Ward in Ohaji/Egbema local government council when pipeline vandals burst open a pipeline which they suspected to be flowing with oil which turned out to be flowing with crude gas.

The councillor also told newsmen that those arrested have been taken to Port Harcourt while formal report have [sic] been made to Umuagua Police Station to guard the vandalized site to prevent further damage. (Text A12: *New Waves* Nov. 10, 2004)

First, the text in Excerpt 31 is a report published on the 10<sup>th</sup>, while the event occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2004. Many actions have been carried out, the reader may not know when subsequent actions (the arrest, the formal report, etc) occurred. This is due to the over-reliance of the reporter on the honourable member of the local council. This obviously constrains the writer to use such synonyms as “the councillor”.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Four issues have been identified as influencing the conflicts going on in the ND discourse, they are: ownership and resource control (ORC), ecological (ECO), inter-

ethnic (IET), and political (POL) issues. Ownership and resource control issues concern the ND people's claim on absolute control of the natural resources (oil) coming from their fatherland; ecological issues relate to agitations over the effects of oil exploitation and exploration on the ND environment; inter-ethnic issues embrace all forms of intra/inter-community clashes resulting from sharing compensations or economic benefits accruing to the lands used by oil companies for oil activities; and political issues affect the other issues especially in terms of minority/majority divisions and perceived marginalisation. Three context categories have also been observed to constrain the lexical choices made by the news reporters in relaying information on ND conflicts; namely, social action (SOAC), participant role relations (PRR), and setting (SETT). Four social actions were identified in the conflicts reported in our data; namely (in order of dominance), HA, AS, CC, and DO. The statistics showed that, within the periods considered, the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) witnessed more conflict actions than the two years apiece considered in Abubakar (1997-98) and Yar'Adua (2008-09) tenures; however, Yar'Adua's witnessed more than Abubakar's.

Three types of participant roles were identified: the ND insurgent group, the FGN group, and the press. The role relations amongst the participant are realised in two forms: interactional and communicative role relations. Interactional role relations involves FGN group and ND insurgent, while communicative role relations involve the information-giving and information-seeking groups. The press here plays three roles; namely, evaluators, manipulators and persuaders) by way of seeking and giving information. In the analysis of setting, the study revealed two broad locations of the social actions: oil-production (oil-exploration and oil-servicing areas) and residential area (urban, rural and creek areas). A summary of these findings can be presented on the table below:

**Table 4.3.16: Summary of chapter four**

s/ n	Contexts				Lexical Choices	Preponderant Newspapers		Issues
			GLOAC	LOCAC		NNPs	NDPs	
1	SOAC	DO	Vandalisation	vandalising, blowing up	collocations, non-technical vocabulary, lexical fields	<i>THISDAY</i>	<i>The Pointer, The Tide</i>	ORC, ECO
			Interruption	seizing, shutting down, taking over				
		CC	Apprehension,	arresting, parading, apprehending	lexical similarity chain	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Pioneer</i>	ORC, ECO
			Amnesty	meeting, laying down of arms				POL
			Prosecution	arraigning, convicting or granting bail				ORC, ECO
		AS	Reprisal	ambushing, shooting, razing	technical vocabulary items, military metaphors	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Tide</i>	ORC, ECO, POL
			Rescue	searching, rescuing, demolishing				ORC, POL
			Ethnic	burning, wounding				ITE, ECO
		HA	Kidnap	maiming, hijacking, kidnapping	lexical fields, synonyms	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Tide</i>	ORC, ITE, POL

			Release	freeing, releasing				POL	
2	PRR	<b>Participant Roles</b>		<b>Interactional</b>		<b>Communicative</b>		<b>Issues</b>	
		ND Group		DO (vandalisers, bombers, preventers), CC (paraded, convicted, arms droppers), AS (shooters, wounded), HA (freedom givers, kidnapers)		information-givers: distant			ORC, ECO, IET, POL
		FGN Group		DO (prevented), CC (prosecutors), AS (rescuers), HA (kidnapped, freed)		information-givers: distant			
		The Press		evaluators, manipulators, persuaders		information-seekers; information-givers: immediate & distant			
3	SETT	<b>Location</b>		<b>GLOACs Going on</b>		<b>News-papers Involved</b>	ORC, ECO, IET, POL		
				Highest	Lowest				
		Oil-production	oil-exploration	kidnap	prosecution,	NNPs & NDPs			
			oil-servicing	reprisal, kidnap, rescue	ethnic				
			Residential	urban	kidnap, release	apprehension			
		rural		amnesty, interruption	prosecution,				
		creek		vandalisation, rescue, ethnic	apprehension, prosecution				

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STYLES AND STYLISTIC STRATEGIES IN THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT DISCOURSE

#### 5.1 Introduction

Writing styles have evolved in newspaper language due to the unique nature and the manner in which its audience consumes it (Fang, 1991: 2). The chapter focuses on identifying the styles used by the newspaper reporter in relaying information on the ND conflict, and discussing the stylistic strategies employed to achieve the styles. The lexical choices associated with the strategies will also be illustrated. The chapter will therefore be developed in the following order: style (evaluative style, manipulative style, and persuasive style), stylistic strategies (naming and describing, viewing actions and events, equating and contrasting, and hypothesising) and conclusion.

#### 5.2 Styles

Three styles have been identified as the styles used by the newspaper reporters; they are: 1. evaluative style, 2. manipulative style, and 3. persuasive style. The styles are generally influenced by the informative style: the primary need to inform the reader. It is in the guise of informing the reader that the other styles are realised through such stylistic strategies as evaluating the entities in the news and the processes they are engaged in, manipulating the text (by implication, the reader's perception) to suit the reporter's perspective, and persuading the reader into believing certain aspects of the discourse that have been presented (i.e. evaluated or manipulated). Therefore, in order to avoid overlap, (we shall not discuss the informative style) we first discuss what the three styles identified have in common, namely, the need or guise to inform.

All the styles (evaluative, manipulative, and persuasive) here are directed at readers who want information on a wide range of news and current affairs (in this case, the ND conflicts) and are prepared to spend a considerable amount of time reading it.

**ONONYE, C.F. (2014). Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.**

Another issue that relates to the styles used by our news reporters here is the readers' lack of alternative sources even as they have limited (almost none) daily experiences with the ND conflicts. Thus, the newspaper writer is observed in the data to assume an authoritative position, providing the first definitions of situations and the first descriptions of facts of the social activities that are on-going in the conflict discourse. These are instructively handed down to the reader as first opinions. This position of the news reporter in news writing corroborates the two main functions of newspaper identified by Giles (1980: 16); namely, to inform the reader in a credible manner, and to enlighten the reader in an integrated style about what is going on in other parts of the community, which is largely apart from the average reader's sphere of immediate apprehension. Finally, the three styles are constrained by the issues and context of the ND conflict discourse.

### **5.2.1 Evaluative style**

By evaluative style is meant a way of news writing by which the news reporter uses value-laden language to express an opinion or point of view. This is a prominent style observed to be extensively used in the data, where the news reporter employs different choices of lexeme that show judgement or emotional attachment to entities in the ND conflict discourse. Some of the linguistic means through which the evaluative style is achieved, as will be demonstrated below (under Stylistic Strategies), are metaphorisation and adjectivisation. Evaluation is done relating to the three contextual categories identified in previous chapter, viz. social action, participant role relations, and setting. These categories have been specifically realised into four entities evaluated in the discourse. They include: the violent encounters between the ND youth activists and the FGN security officials (encounters), the locations of the encounters (locations), the news actors involved in the encounters (news actors), and the roles of the news actors in the encounters (roles). As we shall demonstrate below with the stylistic strategy of naming and describing, the news reporter largely uses such lexical evaluators that allow them to represent their attitude about the entities evaluated in positive or negative light. These categories are presented with some examples from the data in the table below:

**Table 5.2.1: Categories evaluated**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples from the Data</b>
1	<b>Encounters</b>	battle of supremacy, encounter (C16), all-out war (C19), offensive (A1), etc.
2	<b>Locations</b>	Troubled city, stronghold (C20), war theatre (C17), etc.
3	<b>News Actors</b>	kingpin (C20), hoodlums (C18), “Operation Restore Hope” (D11), etc.
4	<b>Roles</b>	rescue mission (C46), military clampdown (C15), little resistance (C3), etc.



The evaluation here has been observed to be made in relation to the issues in the ND conflict discourse (i.e. ownership and resource control, ecology, inter-ethnic wars, and politics, see Chapter Four). For example, the violent encounters are largely evaluated with respect to the ownership and resource control issues; the locations are mainly evaluated in terms of the ecological issues; the news actors and their roles are assessed based on their positions in the inter-ethnic groups and ND quest. In term of evaluation, the NDPs are observed to give more priority to the encounter and location categories than the NNPs, which lay emphasis on the news actors and their roles in the encounters. There are, however, few insignificant overlaps. In the texts below, we consider how the italicised lexical items have been used to evaluate the entities in terms of the issues in the discourse:

**Excerpt 1**

Nigeria's main militant group declared "*all out war*" in the heart of Africa's *biggest* oil and gas industry yesterday after the security forces used gunboats to try to flush its fighters out of the creeks.

According to reliable Agip source from the area, who witnessed the *gun* duel, said that the militants were using *heavy* weaponry in their invasion and that at the end of the *bloody* shoot-out, there were some casualties on the side of the military personnel.

(Text D6 – *New Waves* May 14, 2007)

**Excerpt 2**

The leader of a *notorious* militant group, Niger Delta Enlightenment and Expedition Force (NDEEF) which specializes in the abduction of expatriates has been arrested by the State Security Services (SSS), Delta State Command.

...

The Burutu *kingpin* and eight members of the syndicate have been on the wanted list since April last year.

(Text B25 – *Vanguard* Aug. 26, 2006)

Almost all the lexical evaluations in the excerpts are achieved through adjectivisation, where the value of the evaluation is placed on the qualifying adjective (e.g. "all out", "biggest", "heavy", etc). Metaphors (e.g. "bloody") here are also realised through adjectives. Such lexical evaluators like "all-out", "biggest", "gun", and "bloody" (in Excerpt 1), which are contained in the NDP – *New Waves*, assess the encounter and location being reported. The use of "all-out" war, "gun" duel, and "bloody" shoot out here suggest the seriousness of the ND issues prompting the

conflicts. The lexical evaluators of the encounters are so used by the reporters bearing in mind the only issues that can drag the ND youths into an “all-out” war or “gun” duel with the military task force in the region, namely, ownership and control of the resources in their ancestral land. The issue of ownership and resource control, as we established in the previous chapter, is at the root of most violent encounters in the ND region; and this affects the survivalist roles (e.g. “heavy weaponry”) played by the news actors. Other items like “biggest” assess the location of encounter, which is oil-servicing area. In a similar fashion, “notorious”, and “kingpin” (in Excerpt 2), taken from the NNP – *Vanguard*, appraises the news actors involved and their roles in terms of the manner in which they have championed the quest for the ND issues to be addressed. Such items as “notorious” and “kingpin” connote a negative approach to the ND quest. By using such lexical evaluators (identified) to evaluate the news actors, for example, information is given on the status of the insurgent group and the position of its leader with regard to their stance in the oil struggle.

### **5.2.2 Manipulative style**

By manipulative style is meant a manner of news writing in which the news reporter uses calculated language with an underlying message aimed at influencing or controlling the reader to the reporter’s advantage. The main assumption that will be taken up in the style is hinged on the approach that newspaper language is a communicative tool, which includes more than just inert information. This style of the news text projects the role of the news reporters as being in control of the discourse: witnessing the events and creating the story all by themselves. The newspaper readers are always at the mercy of the reporters in seeing what the reporters foreground or include or make explicit to them, and not noticing what is backgrounded or excluded or made implicit to them.

All the NNPs and *Pioneer* (which is a NDP) employ the manipulative style. Three linguistic means through which this style is achieved are agency deletion, Gricean maxim violation, and thematisation. The manipulative power of the news reporters has been observed in relation to two (out of the three) contextual categories, namely, participant role relations and social actions. Simply put, the primary aim of manipulation in the news texts is to either direct the reader’s attention to or shift it away from the roles taken up by the news actors in the social actions going on in the

discourse. And like the evaluation, this aim is not unconnected to the news reporters' bid to subtly enforce their stance on the issues in the ND discourse. Let us examine the texts that follow:

**Excerpt 3**

Six of the nine foreign oil workers *kidnapped by militant youths* in the Niger Delta twelve days ago, *have regained freedom*. The hostages were on Monday night handed over to the Governor of Delta State....

*Three others* are still been [sic] held by the kidnappers but they *are still in good condition*. The six hostages released were all looking healthy. (Text A26 – *Pioneer* May 2, 2004)

**Excerpt 4**

*The ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militant youths*, following the release of the kidnapped foreign oil workers after series of negotiation, *broke down* yesterday when armed youths engaged men of the Joint Military Task Force on the Niger Delta (JTF) in a bloody battle at Tunu and Benisede Flow Stations in Ekeremor Local Governemnt Area of Bayelsa State. (Text C26 – *THISDAY* Mar. 31, 2006)

Instances of agency deletion (in the first paragraph) and maxim violation (in the second paragraph) are noticed in Excerpt 3. In the text, there are four sentences which contain material clauses that are all realised in passive voices. Notice the difference between the first clauses in the two paragraphs (“Six...oil workers kidnapped by militant youths...”) and “Three others are still being held by the kidnappers”) and the last clauses (“The hostages were handed over...”) and “The six hostages released...”). The attractive thing here in terms of manipulation is the way the lexical items (news actors) functioning as agents (“militant youths” and “the kidnappers”) of the first clauses are supplied, while those of the last clauses are deleted. One may, therefore, wonder if, by saying in the first paragraph that the “oil workers...have regained freedom” (without including the logical agency), the oil workers gave themselves freedom. The practice here, therefore, is that by explicitly attaching negative action to one group of news actors and dissociating it from positive actions, the news reporter reinforces his/her position by directing the readers’ attention to seeing the group in a particular way. By including some information and excluding others, the news reporter achieves his/her manipulative aim. In the second paragraph, the reporter’s claim that the three other hostages that are not yet released “are still in

good condition” may have amounted to the violation of the maxims of quality and relevance. This is in view of the fact that the reporter did not see the captives and cannot stand in the position to determine if they are in good condition or not. At best, the reporter can bring other people’s voices by quotation or attribution. Agency deletion and maxim violation, as they are applied in Excerpt 3, are not unconnected to the political issue, where the FGN (with its supporting newspapers) aim to paint a picture that will justify its view on the ND issues.

In Excerpt 4 above, some of the information, which the news reporter considers contextually important for the reader’s understanding of the social action in the text, have been thematised. In the multiple thematic structure, for example, we have the elements “The ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militant youths” as the topical theme, while others like “following the release of the kidnapped foreign oil workers” and “after series of negotiation” are the textual themes. Ordinarily, the text would have simply read *the ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militant youths broke down...*, but the news reporter’s need to supply information with regard to the ‘when’ and ‘how’ of the actions being reported constrains him to include the textual theme as part of the key information that the reader’s mind is directed to. By bringing up all this information in the theme position and the current actions in rheme position, the reader’s attention is forced to dwell more on the calm situation that prevailed before the breakdown (the bloody battle between the armed youths and the JTF). This reveals the media’s position that the “bloody” encounters do not yield any solution to the issues in the discourse. There may even be a possibility that the reader may be expecting the current battle to be reversed to the former situation, which is also part of the effects of allowing the reader’s mind to first process so much information about the former situation as thematised in the text.

### **5.2.3 Persuasive style**

By persuasive style is meant a manner of news writing in which the news reporter uses rhetorical language with an underlying message aimed at convincing or influencing the reader to see things in the reporter’s way. Like in manipulation, the reader is at the receiving end – the object of persuasion. In fact, one of the major advantages of the news reporter and by extension the newspapers he/she represents is

to be in a position to provide a mediated context – relying on the reader’s expectation of neutrality – to sell ideas to the reader in a subtle but persuasive manner from which the reader may not be able to reason differently. Like the evaluative style, the persuasive style is noticed to be constrained by the three contextual elements (participant role relations, social action and setting). These are also connected to the ND issues because the news reporter makes conscious efforts not only to ensure that the reader believes the opinions put behind the entities evaluated or the aspects of the texts that have been reconstructed, but also change the reader’s outlook on the ND issues. The persuasive style is observed to be largely used by the NNPs (particularly, *The Punch*, *THISDAY* and *The Guardian*), especially with regard to convincing the reader on the FGN’s opinion on the ND issues. Two rhetorical means through which this style is realised is voice attribution and illocution all harnessed in good thought presentation. Let us consider the persuasive power of news language in the texts below:

**Excerpt 5**

ELEVEN persons have in the morning hours of yesterday been arrested in connection with the recent kidnap of two staff of oil services company, Wilbros, by youths of Oporoma in Southern Ijaw Local Government of Bayelsa State. The arrest *was believed to have been made* after due investigation into the case, and a rescue mission embarked upon by the Police in the local division of the district. (Text B2 – *The Punch* Jul 6, 1999)

**Excerpt 6**

A Joint military/police security task force has rescued four foreigners in the notorious creeks of the Niger Delta from hostage takers. ... The source said that they were released during an operation, code named “Guarded Operation for Rescue Mission” at Ekeremor Axis, Bayelsa State. ... It said that the expatriates had been handed over to the SSS.

(Text C22 – *THISDAY* Oct. 3, 2006)

While the text in Excerpt 5 employs voice attribution, that in Excerpt 6 is a case of illocution. Through the choices of lexical items, the texts above exhibit traces of consciousness of relevant contextual features in both their production and comprehension. In Excerpt 5, for example, the verb phrase in the first paragraph is the report of a CC action. But of particular importance to our case here is the verb group in the second paragraph (“was believed to have been made”). Within this verb phrase, the news reporter – constrained by their social role of neutrality – brings in the reporting

verb (“was believed”) as a way of distancing him/herself from the assertion and attributing the opinion to the common belief of the public/witnesses. Of course, other reporting verbs like ‘was said’, etc would have still created the same distancing effect, but the choice of “was believed” in this manner installs the difference by making it seem like the reporter is only conveying what everybody present at the scene *believes* to be true. By distancing him/herself in this way, the reader is persuaded to identify with the rest of the witnesses (at the scenes of kidnap and arrest) on the culpability of the “believed” kidnappers. Another contextual implication why the reporter probably has to go through this linguistic rigour to convince the reader that the Police had not mistaken the arrested youths is predicated upon the knowledge the reader possesses on incessant arrests of innocent citizens by FGN’s security agents.

The text in Excerpt 6, on the other hand, employs external verb phrase modifier, which allows the text producer to include the illocutionary force of convincing the reader on either why the action reported was undertaken or (in this case) the rigours undergone in carrying out a particular action. Here, by such prepositional phrases (as “in the notorious creeks of the Niger Delta”, “from hostage takers”) and adverbial phrase (as “during an operation”) the reporter is also making efforts to convince the reader that the JTF is not only doing its job, but is also facing serious challenges in the course of doing it. Notice also the evaluative adjective (“notorious”) and the task name (“Guarded Operation for Rescue Mission”) brought in to this end. An average reader may have a different feeling (namely, *that the JTF are doing what they are meant to do*) if the text had read *A Joint military/police security task force has rescued four foreigners* without the persuasive prepositional phrases, which allows some insights into the conditions of their job.

### **5.3 Stylistic strategies**

Four stylistic strategies have been identified through which the styles are realised; namely: naming and describing, equating and contrasting, viewing actions and events, and hypothesising. Naming and describing is associated with the evaluative style; viewing actions and events with the manipulative style, while both hypothesising and equating and contrasting are associated with the persuasive style. Some of these strategies may overlap; for example, equating and contrasting the conditions of the different entities in the discourse may involve dealing with the

metaphorical labels given to the entities in terms of naming and describing them. However, effort will be made to locate and separate the different strands of meaning as they relate to their respective styles in each case. We shall discuss the stylistic strategies in succession.

### **5.3.1 Naming and describing**

This is the major strategy in which the evaluative style is achieved. In naming and describing, the news reporter ascribes names (which are different from how the English language conventionally names the world) to entities (e.g. news actors, their actions, roles, etc.) in the discourse. Two broad lexical choices for naming have been observed; namely: metaphorisation and modification. First, metaphorisation is principally realised through emotive metaphors (adjectives and nouns), which form relations of synonymy and collocation. Naming has been observed to cover the four categories evaluated in the discourse (i.e. encounters, locations, news actors, and roles; see Table 5.2.1 above), through an extensive use of emotive metaphors. The emotive metaphors are sourced from three common domains; namely, crime, hunting and military. Military, followed by crime, are by far the most frequent in the data. The military domain is largely reflected especially in describing the encounter; the crime source domain relates to the news actors involved in terms of those perpetrating or controlling the crime; while the roles played by the news actors and the locations of the encounters are described through the source domain of hunting.

#### **5.3.1.1 Military metaphors**

The use of military terminology as source domains for conceptualising and describing the violent encounters between the two groups in the ND conflict occurred most frequently in the data. Three different metaphorical patterns have been observed in the data. They are as shown in the table below:

**Table 5.3.1: Military metaphors**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Source Domain</b>	<b>Metaphorical Code</b>	<b>Target Domain</b>
1	Military	WAR IS INTERACTION	Violent encounter
2	Military	RESCUE IS WAR	Violent encounter
3	Military	SECURITY INTERVENTION IS ASSAULT	Violent encounter



The encounters are between the two groups identified in the conflict discourse; namely, the FGN security agents and/or the oil-working community in the ND (as one group) and the different groups of the ND youths (as the other group). This will include kidnappings/abductions, rescue and reprisal clashes, apprehension attempts, etc which bring the ND youths in violent contact with the other group. The military metaphors provide opportunities for the reporters to evaluate the encounters. While the NDPs (especially, *The Tide* and *The Pointer*) are observed to employ more of SECURITY INTERVENTION IS ASSUALT, the NNPs and *Pioneer* (which is a NDP) utilise more of RESCUE IS WAR in their descriptions of the encounters. WAR IS INTERACTION, as the most preponderant among the metaphorical patterns, is, however, freely used by the newspaper sets. The evaluation of the encounters is generally influenced by four contextual sub-categories; namely, the materials involved, the degree of seriousness, the manner or tactic involved, and the social goal of the encounters being reported. Some illustrations of these kinds of choice in the data will be relevant here:

**Excerpt 7**

The Nigerian Army Headquarters in Abuja yesterday confirmed the *exchange of gunfire* between its men and the militants.... It said three of its soldiers were wounded in the *engagement*.... But the militants claimed they fell four soldiers and a mobile policeman attached to the task force during the operation. (Text C21 – *The Guardian* Mar. 10, 2006)

**Excerpt 8**

Sources said the JTF moved into the Chanomi Creek, Tompolo's stronghold ... in a *protracted operation* which military spokesman ... called a '*cordon, search and rescue mission*'. (Text C24 – *THISDAY* May 16, 2009)

**Excerpt 9**

JTF said *the push* was an attempt to recover two foreign vessels and some of its men taken into hostage few months ago.... Yesterday's *offensive* is seen as the most serious on the militants since they attacked industry sites in what they dubbed a six-day '*oil war*' four months ago. (Text C15 – *The Pointer* May 31, 2009)

### **Excerpt 10**

The *bloody operation* which began at Oporoza with little resistance, later moved to Camp 5 where there was *exchange of gun battle* with the militants.

(Text C3 – *Pioneer* May 18, 2009)

The texts in Excerpts 7 and 10 contain conceptual metaphors that relate to the WAR IS INTERACTION pattern. Such nouns as “exchange” and “engagement” do not only suggest an interaction between two parties (in the case, the ND insurgents and the FGN security agents), they also evaluate the degree of seriousness of the encounter being reported. As the earlier mentioned, presenting the violent encounters as war and interaction between the two opposing groups is the most popular (and generally used by all the newspapers studied) view of the entire social actions going on in the ND. The metaphors in Excerpt 8 subscribe to the RESCUE IS WAR pattern. By the use of the pre-modifying adjective “protracted”, suggest that the “rescue mission” undertaken by the FGN’ JTF is not a simple one, but involves a long-drawn-out war with the ND insurgents. Other adjectives (as used in the co-text) like “cordon” and “search” are technical terms used by the military to describe a tedious rescue task. The description of the encounter in this manner (by *THISDAY* newspaper, which is a NNP that is observed to support the FGN’s political views on the ND) is not unconnected to the political dimension taken by the FGN in terms of justifying its occupation of the ND region. The text in Excerpt 9 is extracted from a NDP, the bulk of which describe the encounters with the SECURITY INTERVENTION IS ASSUALT pattern. Basically, as reflected largely in the NNPs, most ND activists believe that the military actions in the region have caused more assault than the intended provision of security. Hence, such nouns as “the push” and “offensive”, which are synonymous with others like “operation” and “raid”, are semi-technical terms literally suggest an assault.

What immediately strikes us is that while these items are used to describe one encounter between the groups of the news actors, they have also been variously chosen to potentially allow access to multiple source domains of military warfare. Such items as “exchange of gunfire (in Excerpt 7), and “exchange of gun battle” (in Excerpt 10) are used with regard to the materials involved in the encounter. Others like “bloody operation” (in Excerpt 10), “engagement” (in Excerpt 7), “the push” and “offensive” (in Excerpt 8) relate to the degree of seriousness; “cordon, search and rescue mission”

and “the push” (in Excerpt 8) have to do with the manner or tactics involved; while “oil war” goes with the social aim of the encounter.

The military metaphors and their modifying adjectives in the data, as we have demonstrated in the texts above, have been noticed to fall into two lexical patterns; they are: synonymy and collocation. Nearly all the lexical items employed in naming the encounters, like other categories named, are collocations. And it becomes significant how words, which may not easily (or never) co-occur in many other discourses, are freely used together in ND conflict discourse to name the world in conceptual terms. For example, collocations like “bloody operation” or “exchange of gun battle” neatly describe specific social action in the discourse as they would not easily be applied to other situations in which the items can be used. The preponderance of synonymy cannot be over-emphasised because it allows the news writer more room for over-lexicalisation in the data. Virtually all the lexical items here have actual or contextual synonyms. For example, “exchange of gunfire” is synonymous with “offensive” and “confrontation” (in Excerpt 7), and so on. To further appreciate the significance, the synonymy relation has even been observed to comfortably run across the texts in the data in view of the fact that the writers are describing similar and recurrent events in the discourse. For example, “fighting” (in Excerpt 9) can loosely relate with “confrontation” (in Excerpt 7) just as “offensive” (in Excerpt 7) can go with “bloody operation” (in Excerpt 10), in synonymous relations.

#### **5.3.1.2 Crime metaphors**

Aside the military metaphors, the source domain of crime is the next preponderant in the data in terms of describing the encounters. Metaphorical codes relating to crime are used in conceptualising the news actors involved in the violent encounters. This source domain of metaphors demonstrates the popularity of the portrayal of ND violence as crime (see Chapter Six). It flourishes the evaluative style here in terms of assessing the news actors: describing one group as criminal (having committed crimes or disposed to committing crime), and the other group as a cleaner (being mandated to stop crime). This will affect the description of their roles from the source domain of hunting, which will be discussed in the following section. The crime metaphors and their sub-domains are shown below:

**Table 5.3.2: Crime metaphors**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Source Domain</b>	<b>Metaphorical Code</b>	<b>Target Domain</b>
1	Crime	THE MILITANT IS A TROUBLE MAKER	News Actors / Roles
2	Crime	THE SECURITY AGENT IS A CLEANER	News Actors / Roles

The use of metaphorical codes from the domain of crime to describe the news actors in the ND conflict discourse is a mark of the evaluative style. While the NNPs make exclusive use of the THE MILITANT IS A TROUBLE MAKER pattern in the description of the news actors in the encounter, both categories of newspapers (NDPs and NNPs) make moderate use of the metaphorical pattern THE SECURITY AGENT IS A CLEANER. Here, the news reporters bring in their personal opinions of the news actors in an effort to relate information on the crisis events. The metaphorical codes employed in the evaluation of news actors are influenced by three contextual sub-categories of the social actions; namely: the appearance of the news actors, their positions in their groups, and the discourse labels given to them. The appearance category is observed to feature more of emotive adjectives, which evaluate the news actors by modifying the names given to them. Let us offer some illustrations from the data:

**Excerpt 11**

Major Sagir however urged the public not to be disturbed by the JTF operation, as it was meant *root out* cultists and *to return peace* in the state. (Text C27 – *Vanguard* Feb. 16, 2005)

**Excerpt 12**

Some two weeks after the Federal Government ordered the military to *sanitize* militantancy in the Niger Delta region, the Commander of the ... (JTF) and *arrowhead* of the operations ... has thrown light on how the alleged *kingpin* of the militants, chief Government Ekpemupolo (alias Tompolo) was *flushed out* of his military fortress.

The military *topshot* [sic] also opened up on how the alleged *militant* ran a parallel illegitimate administration headquarters in the creeks. (Text C15 – *The Pointer* May 31, 2009)

**Excerpt 13**

In view of the recent crisis in the region, the JTF commander ... has last week ordered a replenishment of the military personnel in the creeks while the *clearout* lasted...

He said the gesture was to make the *tidying mission* more effective ... and to meet the target set out....

(Text B29 – *The Pointer* Feb 19, 2006)

**Excerpt 14**

In continuation of the Joint Task Force's (JTF) *Operation Restore Hope's* Search and Rescue Operation in Chanomi Creek and its environs, another giant stride was yet made yesterday....

(Text D6 – *New Waves* May 14, 2007)

The texts in Excerpts 11 to 14 enact both the metaphorical codes THE MILITANT IS A TROUBLE MAKER and THE SECURITY AGENT IS A CLEANER. First, such names as “arrowhead”, “kingpin”, “topshot” and “militant” conceptualise the divide between the ND insurgents and the FGN security agents in the ND region. By attaching “kingpin / militant” to the ND insurgent leader and “arrowhead / topshot” to the FGN security leader, the line is drawn between the group constituting trouble and the group cleaning it in the region. The military metaphors discussed earlier conceptualise the encounters as war; here, the war largely described as necessitated by the crimes and trouble perpetrated by the ND group. Therefore, the FGN security outfit is in the region to clean up the crimes and troubles. This is further made clear by the evaluation of the news actors’ roles in the events reported in the excerpts. For example, by such conceptual metaphors as “root out”, “return peace” (in Excerpt 11), “sanitize”, “flush out” (in Excerpt 12), “clearout”, “tidying” (in Excerpt 13) and “restore hope” (in Excerpt 14) which describe the role of the FGN’s JTF in the ND, access is given the reader into the indispensable duty and effort of the FGN to bring the region to normalcy. The big question here is: does FGN effort to bring normalcy to the ND region mean addressing the issues in the discourse or is it a political means of telling the world that the ND activists are trouble makers and their troubles need to be cleaned up to keep peace in the region.

A good degree of lexical relation of synonymy is observed with the metaphorical terms for naming news actors and their roles in the conflict encounters here. For example, such lexical items as “return peace” and “root out” (in Excerpt 11) or “sanitize” and “flush out” (in Excerpt 12) or “clearout” and “tidying” (in Excerpt 13) are loosely synonymous with respect to their respective contexts of use. Others like “arrowhead”, “kingpin” and “topshot” (in Excerpt 13) are strict synonyms.

### **5.3.1.3 Hunting metaphors**

Hunting is used here in terms of tracking the perceived trouble makers (ND insurgents), on the one hand, and their (criminals) hiding away from their pursuers (FGN security agents). This could be understood in the same way a prey hides from its predator. It is from this source domain of hunting that most of the locations of encounter are conceptualised in terms of animal habitat. The usual pattern is that while the law enforcement agents seek for the ‘criminals’, the ‘criminals’ in turn hide to

carry out their actions. These metaphorical codes sourced from the domain of hunting, compared to those from the domains of military and crime discussed above, are the least preponderant in the data. The table below shows the common metaphorical code in the source domain of hunting with regard to the naming of locations:

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**Table 5.3.3: Hunting metaphors**

<b>s/n</b>	<b>Source Domain</b>	<b>Metaphorical Code</b>	<b>Target Domain</b>
1	Hunting	ENCOUNTER LOCATION IS AN ANIMAL HABITAT	Location



The metaphorical code: ENCOUNTER LOCATION IS AN ANIMAL HABITAT, is a feature observed in both the NDPs (especially, *The Tide*) and NNPs (particularly, *The Punch* and *THISDAY*). The conceptualisation of the encounter locations in this manner is constrained by two contextual sub-categories. They are: the nature of the location, and the frequency of contact between the two groups. The locations are evaluated in terms of three residential areas (earlier identified in Chapter Four); namely, urban, rural and creek areas. The creek and rural areas are, however, relevant here because they are not only where the ND insurgent groups hide, they are also where more of the violent encounters take place. Some of the hunting metaphors used in naming the locations of the conflict encounters have been exemplified in the excerpts below:

**Excerpt 15**

... That is the only condition to ease the blockage in the *riverine areas* described as *dens* of hijacking, kidnapping, sea pirates, robbery and merciless killing of innocent Nigerians and foreigners.... (Text C31 – *The Punch* Jul. 3, 2007)

**Excerpt 16**

The chairman of Okrika Council ... who broke the news of Tom's exit from the *war-ravaged community*, said items handed over by the warlord included 37 sophisticated guns....

...

His exit would likely usher in a new era of peace in the *crisis ridden-riverine communities* of the state ... and motivate others still lying in their *burrows* to embrace amnesty.

(Text B21 – *The Guardian* Jul. 16, 2004)

Such lexical items as “riverine areas”, “dens” (in Excerpt 15), “war-ravage”, “crisis ridden-riverine” and “burrows” (in Excerpt 16) are names given to the locations of the violent encounters. All the location names here, however, have negative dimensions to their evaluation. “Riverine areas” or “communities” are terms that have a neutral content, but the negative dimension given to them in the texts is co-textually and contextually derived. For example, it is anaphorically described as a “den” in the text, which is a negative metaphor. In the same manner (in Excerpt 16), the neutral terms are made negative by the company of negative adjectives (“war-ravaged” and “crisis-ridden” which exophorically refer forward to “burrows”) they keep in the text.

A degree of synonymy and hyponymy relations can also be noticed with the metaphorical terms for naming the locations here. For example, such lexical items as “dens” (in Excerpt 15) and “burrows” (in Excerpt 16) can be strict synonyms; they are also co-hyponyms of animal habitat. Others like “war-ravaged” and “crisis ridden” (in Excerpt 16) are also synonymous.

Noun modification is another linguistic device through which this strategy (naming and describing) is practised in the data, by structurally providing information on the head noun. This information-giving is generally observed to be motivated by the five genre-conventional reasons for providing information; namely: the need for the narrator to introduce the entities existing or connected to the social actions being described, to summarise past events for the reader to appreciate the current one, to provide the reason why the current action was carried out, to include the time or place of occurrence, and to describe the nature or role of the entities engaged in the actions. Some of these motivations for including information in the noun group can be exemplified:

**Excerpt 17**

The incident *which took most residents and security agencies within Eket urban off-guard* occurred at Esa Akpan Park, a rented estate for expatriates, during the evening hours of last Tuesday. (Text D7 – *Pioneer* Oct. 10, 2006)

**Excerpt 18**

The militia leader *whose forces have been fighting those of the former Ijaw Youths Council president Asari Dokubo, for supremacy*, reportedly got information on an imminent military incursion into his community and quickly surrendered the arms to take to flight yesterday.

(Text B21 – *The Guardian* Jul. 16, 2004)

**Excerpt 19**

The youths *who accused Shell of refusing to implement the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) signed with Kuka community two years ago*, also directed all members of staff of another oil company Chevron/Texaco, to quit the area immediately. (Text A16 – *The Guardian* Oct. 6, 2006)

**Excerpt 20**

The incident *which occurred in the early hours of yesterday around the usually busy Yenezue-Gen suburb of Yenagoa....*

(Text D50 – *Vanguard* Aug. 21, 2008)

**Excerpt 21**

A militia group, *which styled itself “Martyrs Brigade”* yesterday, issued a 21-day ultimatum to Mobil Producing Nigeria.... (Text A22 – *THISDAY* Mar. 11, 2006)

Without going into the ‘delicacy’ of the clauses in the texts and their respective noun groups, we focus at this point on the noun group modifications motivated by the need to give information we pointed out above. The part of the noun groups through which information is added to the noun (phrase) head have been italicised in the texts. In Excerpt 17, the (rank-shifted clause) post-modifier *there* introduces such participants as “residents and security agencies” who are concerned with the incident being reported; the post-modifier in Excerpt 18 summarises the history of activities that the current participants had engaged in; that in Excerpt 19 provides the reason for the current action taken by the participants; the ones in Excerpt 20 appositionally supply the time and place of the event; while the one in Excerpt 21 describes the participants involved.

For our naming strategy here, we may not be interested in all but the last motivation for noun group modification; namely, describing the nature of the news participants by including evaluation. In fact, one strategic importance of the noun group with regard to naming is that the news reporter is able to package-up ideas or opinions about the entities being described (Jeffries, 2010: 20). Noun modification here has, thus been realised mainly in two patterns; namely, by relation, and by apposition. Let us consider the noun groups in the following excerpts from the data:

**Excerpt 22**

The latest seizure lunched by heavily armed militants who were said to have overpowered security operatives on guard duty, might not be unconnected with disagreement over the non-implementation of a memorandum of understanding....

(Text A25 – *Vanguard* Nov. 7, 2006)

**Excerpt 23**

The commissioner, who looked visibly satisfied by the success recorded by his men on the beat, opined that with the arrest of the suspects, the spate of kidnapping in the state would definitely come to an end.

(Text D27 – *The Pointer* Oct. 16, 1999)

**Excerpt 24**

The Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation restore Hope ... said that the number of its men missing ... had risen to 18.

(Text C2: *Midweek Pioneer* May 27, 2009)

**Excerpt 25**

The Joint Task Force (JTF), the special military outfit policing the oil-rich creeks of the Niger Delta, launched severe air bombardment on several Ijaw communities on Friday....

(Text C25 – *THISDAY* Feb. 26, 2006)

While the noun group (NG) in Excerpts 22 and 23 are cases of modification by relation (where the post-modifiers are connected to the head noun (phrase) with relative pronouns, though it is not visible in Excerpt 22), the noun groups in Excerpts 24 and 25 are cases of modification by apposition. Roughly, the clause in Excerpt 22 is a case of passive transformation, comprising a NG (from “The latest seizure” to “guard duty”) as the grammatical subject of the passive verb (“might not be unconnected”) and another NG (from “disagreement” to the end) for its grammatical object. Excerpt 23 is also made up of a grammatical Subject (from “The commissioner” to “on the beat”), an active verb (“opined”), and a grammatical Object (starting from “that...the spate of kidnapping” to the end). Excerpt 24 includes two NGs: a grammatical subject (from “The Joint” to “Restore Hope”), an active verb (“said”), and a grammatical object (from “that” to the end). Excerpt 25 also contains two NGs: the NG1 (from “The Joint” to “Niger Delta”), as the grammatical subject of the active verb (“launched”), and NG2 (“severe air bombardment”), which has a PP complement. Some details have been skipped; let us examine the structure of the noun groups to ascertain what pieces of information are added and to what evaluative end they are brought into the noun group. Some of the NGs in the three texts can therefore further be analysed in the following ways:

**Table 5.3.4: Noun group modification**

<b>NOUN GROUP</b>			
<b>SLOT 1:</b> <b>Determiner/ Enumerator</b>	<b>SLOT 2: Pre- Head Modification</b>	<b>SLOT 3:</b> <b>Head Noun</b>	<b>SLOT 4: Post-Head Modification</b>
<b>Excerpt 22</b>			
The	Latest	seizure	lunched by <u>heavily armed militants</u>
		militants	who were said to have <u>overpowered</u> security operatives on guard duty
<b>Excerpt 23</b>			
The		commissioner	who looked <u>visibly satisfied</u> by the success recorded by his men on the beat
<b>Excerpt 24</b>			
The		Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta	<u>Operation restore Hope</u>
<b>Excerpt 25</b>			
The		Joint Task Force (JTF)	the <u>special military</u> outfit
		special military outfit	<u>policing</u> the oil-rich creeks of the Niger Delta

From the breakdown, it is observed that the texts are characterised by heavy use of the modification SLOT 4, which is largely used for the supply of information on SLOT 3 (head noun). Consider the information in SLOT 4; it contains lexical items that are evaluative, thereby including the reporters' personal opinions on the head nouns. For example, the SLOT 4 of Excerpts 22 includes such metaphorical terms as "heavily armed" and "militants", which, as we earlier identified, respectively belong to the metaphor dimensions of evaluating news actors. Other like "Operation Restore Hope" (in Excerpt 24) relates to discourse label dimension; "special", "military" and "policing" (in Excerpt 25) talk respectively about appearance, position and role assessments of the participants involved. Also notice that this time, instead of the ND group, the role evaluated with the choice of "policing" is that of the FGN group. However, while "visibly satisfied" relates to the appearance dimension, "Operation Restore Hope" is associated with discourse labelling.

One thing that can hardly go without notice is the relationship that noun group modification has with choice of noun as two linguistic devices utilised for the same naming practice. Even Table 5.3.4 helps to show that noun modification in our data deals more with SLOT 4 while choice of noun uses more of SLOT 2. Another point of difference is that, unlike the latter, the former scarcely will realise synonymy, though it is possible to feature a few collocation. The two devices, however, make good use of metaphors and adjectives that modify them.

### **5.3.2 Viewing actions and events**

This is the chief strategy through which the manipulative style is realised in the data. The viewing actions and events strategy utilises the verbal element (the predicator) of the clause in presenting the actions and processes that take place between/among the news participants in the discourse. Here, the news reporter determines the choices of lexical verbs (and/or the modifiers) that will stereotypically present the information (on what is being done (actions) and what is happening (events) in the discourse) in a way that will suit the reporter's purpose: in a way that will be believable. Each choice has consequences for the way in which the reader now sees the situation, although this may be subtle. Hence, according to Jeffries (2010: 37), "we are all susceptible to the nuances of those who speak to us".

Two linguistic devices have been identified for the strategy: thematisation and nominalisation, which largely utilise the transitivity model. The transitivity model is the relevant linguistic device here through which the news reporter assigns lexical verbs to different categories according to the kind of process the verb appears to be describing. The four major categories of transitivity process have been noticed in the data. They comprise the material process (representing the things physically done or happened to the news actors; e.g. “Daniel...has been abducted...”), mental process (depicting what happens within the news actors, e.g. “He thanked the militant leader...”), relational process (identifying attributes observed in the relationships between news actors; e.g. “...these people are militants...”), and verbal process (capturing actions of saying by the news actors; e.g. “Our source told us...”). The verbal process, being an exclusive of the news reporter, has also been observed to include other semiotic ways of representing what has been said (such as demonstrating, showing, indicating, etc.). The material process and verbal process, however, dominate the relational process and mental process in the data. That the material and verbal processes preponderate lends credence to the earlier claim that the reporter is essentially interested in presenting the situations in the discourse not only in a way s/he desires them to be viewed, but at the same time convincing the reader of the neutrality of the news reporting (especially, seeing the events from the eyes of relevant authorities or witnesses). Material actions, being the most prototypical verbs referring to something that is done or happens in a physical or abstract way, have been divided into the two broad categories proposed by Simpson (1993: 89; cf. Berry 1975, and Jeffries 2010). They are: material action event (MAE – the happening process, especially to inanimate actors), and action process, which in turn bifurcates into intentional material action (IMA – voluntary action by conscious beings), and superventional material action (SMA – unintentional actions by conscious being). In many instances in the data, however, the reporters have been observed to accommodate some elements (in clauses) in order to represent some of the processes in a marked way: to contain their influential views on the events being reported.

This strategy, as earlier hinted, utilises both the lexical verbs (capturing the processes) and their modifiers in the verb phrases. On the part of the lexical verbs, our focus is not on the unmarked material actions performed by conscious beings. However, for our strategy here, focus is directed at the marked ways through which the

actions and events have been viewed. Therefore, two patterns have been observed to be utilised for the manipulative style; namely: introducing unconscious beings as Agents of material process, and the changing the processes into existing entities. The bulk of the material clauses captured in the data is marked with unusual participants. Normally for a material action process, we expect to find an Actor (who is a conscious being, a Goal in an effective environment (in clauses of doing); and possibly also a Beneficiary (if the clause is benefactive), and perhaps a Range in a middle environment (in clauses of happening). But on the contrary, a good number of clauses in the data have a marked pattern of selecting an unconscious beings as Agents of material actions. This is mainly achieved through thematisation. Let us see to what stylistic end the clauses below have been put:

**Excerpt 26**

Tragedy again struck in the Niger Delta region yesterday as nine people were killed in two separate incidents in Warri, Delta State and Ologbobiri, Bayelsa State.

The Warri violence broke out at about 3.30 p.m. after the yet to identified youths riding in a tugboat arrived the place to close the Nigerian Port Authority base.

(Text C28 – *THISDAY* Apr. 21, 2004)

**Excerpt 27**

The raging war between the Federal Task Force on Pipeline Vandalisation has paid off as attempt by pipeline vandals to engage the task force personnel in a gun duel has resulted in a heavy explosion that consumed eight operational barges of the vandals.... (Text A10 – *The Pointer* Jan. 25, 2006)

**Excerpt 28**

Hostilities between the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) and militants in the Niger Delta escalated yesterday as JTF has confirmed the destruction of *Iroko* Camp, a militant stronghold in Oporoza Community, Warri ... Delat State.

(Text C30 – *The Punch* Oct. 29, 2008)

In the excerpts above, certain lexical items that the writers want to call the attention of the readers to have been carefully thematised. This textual strategy is noticed in the tendency of the news writers to swap over the result (i.e. Goal or Range of the processes) of the activities in the texts to become the subject of attention, thus making them to be Subject of the main clauses, and hence Agent of the actions in the texts. This looks rather simple but it takes a great deal of linguistic rigour and stylistic



manoeuvring for the writers to make specific choices of lexical verbs that will allow them change the positions of the process participants in this manner. One point that needs to be made here is that these stylistic efforts are not without consequences. First, the lexical verbs chosen to describe the situations in the clauses are mainly of the material action, but our focus is on the main verbs in the clauses. Without going into the complexities of these texts, a diagram showing the transitivity choices in the major clauses may be helpful:

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**Table 5.3.5: Unusual material actions**

	<b>Main clause IMA</b>	<b>Subordinate clause IMA</b>
Excerpt 26	Tragedy struck	nine people were killed....
	The Warri violence broke out	youths ... arrived the place....
Excerpt 27	The raging war ... has paid off	attempts ... has resulted....
Excerpt 28	Hostilities ... escalated	

All the material action clauses (except the subordinate clauses in Excerpt 26) have a marked pattern in terms of selecting unconscious beings as Agents. There is a noticeable conscious effort of the writers in choosing not only the IMA type of processes, but also intransitive lexical verbs that require no Goal or Range. Thus, instead of reading, respectively: *nine people were killed resulting in tragedy...*; *the youths arrived Warri and the violence broke out...*; (in Excerpt 26), *attempt...has resulted in a raging war...* (in Excerpt 27); and *JTF confirmed the hostilities between its men and militants...* (in Excerpt 28), the unconscious Agents and intentional material actions (“tragedy struck”, “the Warri violence broke out”, “the raging war has paid off”, and “hostilities escalated”) have rather been foregrounded. And one may be motivated to ask: who or what then are the participants responsible for the material actions, since according to Chomsky (1965: 19) it will be “restrictive” for the unconscious agents to perform the actions stylistically ‘attached’ to them? The actual participants responsible for the actions, by another textual effort of the writers’, have been played down through subordination as the table shows. It can, therefore, be clearly understood that all efforts are made towards focusing the reader’s attention on the thematised lexical items in the clauses, which, though made to be the agents, but in logical fact the result of the actions of the participants that have been backgrounded in the clauses.

Aside the attachment of unconscious participants as Agents of material actions to change the focus of the reader from the actual performers of the actions to the problems resulting from the actions as we have seen, another stylistic potential for viewing actions is presenting them as nouns instead of verbs. The news reporters, in very many instances in the data, have been observed to prefer capturing prototypical processes as entities, thereby making verbs into nouns. This has been observed to follow two morphological patterns, many involving the addition of morphemes (e.g. operation, engagement, resistance, abduction, action, etc), and some others just being used without addition (e.g. raid, attack, talk, arrest, push, etc.). The following samples from the data do not only show these morphological patterns, but also demonstrate how the news writers have viewed the original actions:

**Excerpt 29**

JTF said *the push* was *an attempt* to recover two foreign vessels abducted by Tompolo's men....

Yesterday's *fighting* is seen as the most serious since militants attacked industry sites....

(Text C24 – *THISDAY* May 16, 2009)

**Excerpt 30**

The *military operation*, which reportedly took place around 1pm yesterday, left the oil city swarming with victims of the *bombardment*.... (Text C27 – *Vanguard* Feb. 16, 2005)

**Excerpt 31**

They also want the court to declare that the *destruction* of lives, property and *mass displacement* of innocent persons including women and children by the *military bombardment* of the communities in the state was a *gross violation* of their fundamental rights and humanitarian protection conferred on them by the constitution, and the Geneva Conventions, Act Cap G3 Laws of the Federation, 2004.

(Text B31 – *The Punch* Jul. 24, 2009)

(Although we are working with the transitivity model, we describe the noun groups and some other parts of the texts in terms that will conveniently enhance the clarity of the analyses). The various cases of nominalisation in the texts have been italicised. Excerpt 29 has two paragraphs with one sentence apiece. The interesting part of the first sentence is the object (comprising series of NGs the most attractive of which are “the push” and “an attempt”); while for the second sentence it is the subject (“Yesterday’s fighting”). Excerpt 30 has fairly straight-forward structure with two NGs: one as the grammatical subject (from “The military operation” to “yesterday”) with a relative clause embedded, and the other as the grammatical object (from “the oil city” to the end). But the interesting elements are the subject NG head “military operation” and the complement NG “the bombardment”.

The noun groups “the push”, “an attempt”, “yesterday’s fighting”, “the military operation”, and “the bombardment” are cases of nominalisation; the original verbs have been changed to nouns. These nominalisations (or nouns now) contain implicit assessments (by the reporters) of the original verbs as established assertions that the actions took place. For example, if the text in Excerpt 29 had read *JTF said that they pushed* or *they attempted to recover*..., it would have been subject to doubt if the actions (of pushing and attempting) actually took place or not (and maybe to what

degree they push and/or attempted). But by transforming the actions to nouns (“the push” and “an attempt”), it appears the reporter has judged that the actions took place, and hence has settled the doubts that would have come up. Instead of the readers probing the nouns, their attention is now diverted to (what is now made to be) the verb of the sentence, because according to Weber (1992: 109), the proposition of a text lies in the verbal element. The same applies to the noun groups in Excerpt 30; instead of reading *the military operated in the oil city and bombarded the victims...*, again noun groups (“military operation” and “bombardment”) are used to represent these actions of operating and bombing. By viewing the actions thus, emphasis is taken away from them to whether the oil city is left with victims or not.

The sentence in Excerpt 31 may be the most interesting. It has a complex SVC structure, with the Complement (starting from “the court”) including subordinate clauses. However, the interesting part is the embedded clause (from “the destruction” to the end), which is more or less the basis of the proposition of the sentence. The Subject of this clause, made up of a coordinated pair of NGs (NG1: “the destruction of lives, property” and NG2: “mass displacement of innocent persons...” ending with “state”), is linked by a copula (“was”) to the Complement, which is also a complex NG with post-modification involving a relative clause. Looking at the sentence in a little more detail, we have:

**Table 5.3.6: Clause structure**

<b>SUBJECT</b>		
<b>NG 1</b>	<b>Conj.</b>	<b>NG 2</b>
the destruction of lives, property	and	mass displacement of innocent persons including women and children by the military bombardment of the communities in the state
<b>COMPLEMENT</b>		
<b>NG</b>	<b>RELATIVE CLAUSE</b>	
a gross violation of their fundamental rights and humanitarian protection	conferred on them by the constitution, and the Geneva Conventions, Act Cap G3 Laws of the Federation, 2004.	

The Subject here is not asserted. It is merely assumed without any contention that the occurrence of the destruction of lives, property and the consequent mass displacement of persons (which in themselves are simple phrases referring to an immensely recurrent set of activities happening in the ND discourse) was caused by the military bombardment of the communities in question. Consider the fascinating choices of the words “destruction”, “displacement”, “bombardment”, or even “violation” (in the Object position), which are nominalisations of the verbs *to destroy*, *to displace*, *to bombard*, and *to violate*, respectively. If the text had read *lives were destroyed and innocent persons displaced when the military bombarded the communities*, the reader would have been encouraged by such a structure to question the relationship between the parts of the structure. But making these verbs into nouns would change the focus of the clause from destruction, displacement, and bombardment (which have stylistically been made to be part of the NG, which are already settled as having been in existence) to the proposition of the sentence; namely, the question of these occurrences being a huge violation of human rights or not. The nominalisation of “violation” (which is the head noun of the Complement) itself is also made a non-issue; assumed to be the settled (documented) judgement if the proposition were to be true.

Apart from the lexical verbs (including unconscious material Agents, and turning actions into nouns), other devices for viewing actions and events are the lexical verb modifiers. Some of the verb phrases used in the data are candidates for the manipulative style, considering the ways they are made to accommodate certain modifications through which more information is added to the processes being described. This additional information is usually persuasive, targeted towards neutrality; hence, making the reader believe the story. The verb group modification utilises the reporting verb to this end. Let us examine the following examples:

**Excerpt 32**

The Federal Government yesterday arraigned two persons ... at a Federal High Court, Port Harcourt....

The two men *were alleged to have conspired* with others who are at large to imprison four Norwegian expatriate oil workers ... and made it impossible for the victims to be located and rescued... (Text B20 – *The Guardian* Jan.1, 2007)

**Excerpt 33**

The fire disaster, *believed to have been occasioned* by a burst pipe of the Pipelines Products Marketing Company (PPMC), threw the community into confusion, as many have already started fleeing to adjoining villages and cities.

(Text A30 – *The Punch* Sep. 20, 1999)

**Excerpt 34**

Briggs *was said to have been abducted* from his residence in Port Harcourt around 9 p.m. on Thursday, few hours after addressing the state stakeholders' meeting on electoral matters, at Diète Spiff Civic Centre.

(Text D9 – *New Waves* Dec. 17, 2004)

The texts above exhibit traces of consciousness of such relevant contextual categories (in their production and consumption) relating the roles of both the writer and the reader as social participants in the discourse. In Excerpt 32, for example, the material process in the first paragraph gives us the scenario. But of particular importance to us here is the verb group chosen to represent the situation in the second paragraph; with the reporting verbs (“were alleged to have”) modifying the main verb (“conspired”) in the verb group. We have similar verb groups in Excerpts 33 (“believed to have been...”) and 34 (“was said to have been...”). Within this verb phrases, the news writers – constrained by their social role of neutrality – bring in the reporting verbs (with the option of excluding them) as a way of distancing themselves from the events being reported. These trade-marked forms of reporting verb is one of the many meta-linguistic strategies through which news writers “maintain their influential face[s]” in news reporting (Fairclough, 1992b: 19). Of course, such ‘saying’ reporting verb structures like “was said to have” (in Excerpt 34), create lesser the distancing effect than others that bring in content verbs in the structure, but they still make maximum neutrality impact. The choice of “alleged” and “believed” in these instances installs the difference by making it seem like the reporter is only conveying what everybody present at the scene *believes* to be true. By distancing her/himself in this way, the reader is encouraged to believe (if not the writer, then) the rest of the reasonable witnesses at the scenes (for Excerpt 32, for example) of kidnap, arrest (and ultimately the legal personnel in the court) of the culpability of the *alleged* kidnappers. Ultimately, by the use of the distancing devices, the reader’s attention is directed to the universal logic that if everybody can believe the story, then the reader should, especially when it is not judged by the reporter alone.



### 5.3.3 Equating and contrasting

This is one of the two strategies through which the persuasive style is used in the news texts. The equating and contrasting strategy relies on equivalence and opposition. Instances abound in the data where texts have been made to bring together new sets of equivalence and opposition between lexical items, which would ordinarily never relate to each other out of the ND context. The general pattern, however, is that while many unfavourable conditions faced by some actors in the news are exposed through creating new equivalences, certain ideological impression built on some people or issues are countered through creating oppositions.

In relaying the unfavourable conditions in the ND discourse, three syntactic structures have been identified through which equivalence is textually constructed in the data: appositional equivalence (making use of apposition convention), metaphorical equivalence (involving fixed and non-fixed metaphors), and intensive relational equivalence (involving the copula verb ‘to be’). These devices of equivalence are observed to be utilised by news reporters in representing news actors’ experiences. Let us consider the structure of the following text sample from the data:

#### **Excerpt 35**

Armed youths suspected to be Urhobos, have kidnapped two Britions working for a marine transportation company at Ovwian-Aladja....

By press time, the Delta State Police Command said efforts were in top gear to track down those behind the criminal act.

(Text D35 – *The Punch* Aug. 11, 1999)

#### **Excerpt 36**

Commercial and other economic activities were immediately paralysed as the Warri main market and other business outfits along Warri/Sapele Road were closed to prevent looting.

(Tex C1 – *Pioneer* Oct. 3, 2004)

#### **Excerpt 37**

Ten militant youths and one soldier, in the early hours of yesterday, lost their lives in a fierce battle between the hoodlums and members of “Operation Restore Hope”, a military outfit responsible for peacekeeping mission in Delta and Bayelsa states. (Text C13 – *The Tide* Aug 22, 2006)

### **Excerpt 38**

The Joint Task Force in the Niger Delta, Operation Restore Hope, on Monday, said that the number of its men missing since its onslaught against militants in the Niger-Delta began on May 13, 2009, had risen to 18.

(Text C2 – *Midweek Pioneer* May 27, 2009)

In the excerpts above, like in many instances in the data, certain lexical items are brought in by the reporters to capture the situations in the discourse in a way that will convince the reader of the conditions of the participants. Excerpts 35 and 36 are cases of metaphorical equivalence. The use of the metaphors “gear transmission” and “paralysis” from the domains of engineering and anatomy, respectively, is remarkable. For example, with the “efforts” of the police with respect to the adverse situation equated with being in “top gear”, and the “commercial activities” in Warri equated with being “paralysed”, temporary meaning relationships are created, in these cases, between semantically unrelated entities. These similar textual practices underscore the stylistic aim of the narrators: to convince the reader of the seriousness of both the efforts by the police and the crisis in Warri, respectively. It should also be explained (to avoid reduplicating exemplary texts) that the two cases of metaphorical equivalence involve a copular verb (“were”), and as such, can stand for intensive relational equivalence. Also interesting are some of the phrases that make up the texts in Excerpts 37 and 38. The regular occurrence of such pairs of phrases as “Operation Restore Hope” and “a military outfit ...” (in Excerpt 37), and “The Joint Task Force...” and “Operation Restore Hope” (in Excerpt 38) as cases of appositional equivalence, marks the persuasive style. The reporters, sometimes, make redundant use of this kind of equivalence just to call the attention of the reader to the duty of the FGN security officials (Joint Task Force) in the ND region as that of ‘restoring hope’ in the midst of the crisis in the region.

Aside presenting unfavourable experiences through creation of equivalence, another textual practice identified in the data for persuasion is countering social labels attached to some participants in the discourse. And, as earlier mentioned, this is done through the construction of opposition. Four syntactic triggers of opposition are found in the data, including negated opposition, concessive opposition, replacive opposition, and contrastives. The concessive opposition is however the most dominant in the data. Let us examine the syntactic frames of the following text samples from the data:

**Excerpt 39**

... The communities, all situated in the Gbaramatu area of Delta State, have however said *they, and not illegal bunkerers*, were the target of the air raid. (Text C25 – *THISDAY* Feb. 26, 2006)

**Excerpt 40**

*Despite the widespread condemnation* of incessant kidnappings and hostage taking in the Niger Delta region, *64 more* Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) workers were last week taken hostage by some youths from Isokoland. (Text D46 – *The Guardian* Jul. 26, 1999)

**Excerpt 41**

Rimtip said he suspected *local youths, rather than militants*, were responsible for the attack.

...

The insistence by JTF that *saboteurs, rather than militants*, masterminded the latest attack might not be unrelated to the fact that the pipeline runs through an area whose ownership has been the bone of serious contention between the Ijaw communities.... (Text A18 – *THISDAY* Jan. 4, 2009)

**Excerpt 42**

Explaining that most of the weapons used by the group were *not imported but manufactured* within their camp, Ebetor called on the Federal government to tap their knowledge and experience for the local provision of arms and ammunition. (Text B3 – *Pioneer* Jul. 12, 2009)

The syntactic triggers of opposition have been italicised in the texts. Consider the different kinds of oppositions set up among the lexical items in the clauses. For example, Excerpt 39 is based on negated opposition. It employs a negative/positive pair structure used to set up an opposition between two apparently unrelated entities: “they” (the communities around Gbaramatu kingdom) and “illegal bunkerers”. This is specifically meant to inform and hence persuade the reader (and thus the JTF agents that are after bunkerers) or the difference between (or what it means to be living where there are) bunkerers and innocent members of the communities. That in Excerpt 40 is a case of concessive opposition, employing the ‘DESPITE X, Y’ structure, set up between the two items: “Despite the widespread...” and “64 more SPDC workers...were...taken hostage”. Again, this is meant to persuade the reader that hostage-taking crisis is still serious (if not more than it used to be). Excerpt 41 presents two groups of lexical items, where “local youths” and (its synonym in the text) “saboteur” are put in a replacive opposition with “militants” in an ‘X RATHER

THAN Y' structure. The text here informs the reader of the two possible perpetrators of the attack; but with the replacive opposites (even from the perspective of the participant being indirectly rendered by the narrator), the reader is persuaded that it is one out of the two that is responsible. Finally, in Excerpt 42, a contrastive opposition is set up between two lexical verbs ("imported" and "manufactured") in a 'NOT X, BUT Y' structure. In these contrastives, the pair involved is not related but the narrator brings them together for specific stylistic meaning. For example, the verb "manufactured" may not be semantically related to "imported" in terms of antonymy; in fact, a decontextualised antonym for "import" is "export". The likely semantic gap here, as in the opposites in Excerpts 39–40, which might hinder the opposing items being seen as opposites is filled by the cognitive context shared by both the writer and reader. These are presupposed in their knowledge of what are obtainable in the various situations presented in the (texts) discourse. Therefore, by setting up these pairs of opposites, the stylistic meaning of the writers is clearly persuasive.

#### **5.3.4 Hypothesising**

Hypothesising is another stylistic strategy that is found to inform the persuasive style in the data. Here, the news reporter explicitly introduces their viewpoint by producing an alternative text world that the reader may potentially be influenced into believing, desiring or fearing. Because the reporter has little chance of including their view in the news text (even when they do, they only end up with a weak certainty or likelihood), they are observed to combine the strategies of hypothesising and perspectivising in the data (perspectivising is a stylistic strategy of managing news actors' voices): a powerful combination utilised for persuasive end. Here, the hypothetical views of selected news actors are presented (through their speeches) in a potentially very persuasive manner that will influence the reader. The news actors, whose views are perspectivised, are mainly authorities with respect to the problem in the discourse. Therefore, one reason observed why the news actors' speeches are accommodated in this manner is to assess their modal views on sensitive issues in the discourse. This effect on the recipient depends on what the reader thinks of the reporter/speaker, because as Jeffries puts it, "any modal statement coming from respected organisations will tend to be believable because of their status" (2010: 115). Therefore, hypothesising is typified by the linguistic system of modality, where two

broad types of modal meaning have been identified as used in the data; namely, epistemic modality, and boulomaic modality). The epistemic modality is characterised in the data by modal adverbs, adjective, auxiliaries, and lexical verb, which mainly show likelihood or low certainty; while boulomaic modality is typified by conditional structures, lexical verbs, and modal auxiliaries, which express desire. The epistemic modality however dominates. Let us consider the following examples:

**Excerpt 43**

The spokesman of the group told our correspondent in a telephone interview that with the magnitude of the crisis that *has* engulfed the state before the troop were deployed, *it was possible* for the militants to carry out little skirmishes. He said: “it is *possible* for one or two crisis to happen, but we are gradually moving towards pushing them out of the state.” (Text D5 – *Pioneer* Sep. 13, 2007)

**Excerpt 44**

“We *wish* to reiterate once again that these acts of criminality are unacceptable to the government and people of Rivers State, and as they are inimical to the development of the state and nation.” (Text D54 – *The Guardian* Dec. 21, 2006)

**Excerpt 45**

“The fire is gradually spreading towards that AP filling station and *if* that should happen, *it would* be disastrous to us all.” (Text A19 – *THISDAY* May 15, 1998)

**Excerpt 46**

Colonel Abubakar added that the operation *will* continue until all captives were set free. (Text D8 – *Pioneer* May 21, 2009)

The lexical items indicating the modal meanings are italicised in the texts. The modal elements in all of the texts above (except for Excerpt 46) are cases of perspectivised modality. As earlier pointed out that the reporters, in order to manage the readers’ neutrality impression) make their views less explicit. Hence, Excerpt 46 (which is a case of reported speech involving the reporter’s paraphrase) is the weakest modal meaning among the texts. The modal adjective “possible” (in Excerpt 43) is of epistemic meaning, expressing likelihood or weak certainty; the modal verb “wish” (in Excerpt 44) is of boulomaic meaning showing desire; the conditional structure “if..., it...” (in Excerpt 45) is of epistemic meaning expressing strong certainty; while the modal auxiliary “will” (in Excerpt 46) is a case of epistemic meaning with strong

certainty. Now, the next question is what is the influential reason why these news actors' views are sought? The two news actors involved in Excerpts 43 and 44 are JTF senior officials, whom, after their military raid on the militants' camps, have been sought to air their professional prediction about the future occurrences of militancy. In view of the strong fear (as expressed in the larger part of the texts) over the resurgence of the militants, the reporter cannot do but bring in the soldiers' perspectives on the issue. By the use of weak certainty (in Excerpt 43) and desire which is equivalent to weak certainty, the readers are hereby convinced that the militants can strike any time. In the same vein, Excerpt 45 is a case of fire explosion disaster, where the fire went slightly uncontrollable. The fire fighter's assessment and modal statement is also harnessed by the writer to persuade the reader on the seriousness of the fire and its impact. Excerpt 46 is similar to those in Excerpts 43 and 44, but the text is an indirect report of the soldier, where apart from the moderate epistemic meaning, may not hold much persuasive value.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Three styles have been identified as used by the newspaper reporters – evaluative, manipulative, and persuasive styles – which are generally influenced by the primary need of the news reporter to inform the readers. Four stylistic strategies have been observed through which the styles are realised; namely: naming and describing, equating and contrasting, viewing actions and events, and hypothesising.

The evaluative style is marked by four categories evaluated in the data, (*viz.* the violent encounters, the locations of the encounters, the news actors involved, and their roles), which are connected to the contexts and issues in the ND conflict discourse. Both the NDPs and NNPs employ the evaluative style. The style is basically realised through emotive metaphors and adjective. The style is associated with one stylistic strategy, naming and describing, which utilise two broad linguistic patterns for naming: metaphorisation and noun modification. The manipulative style involves the reporter's use of calculated language with an underlying message aimed at influencing the reader. All the NNPs and *Pioneer* (which is a NDP) employ the manipulative style. The style is also influenced by the ND issues and contexts earlier identified. The style is generally realised through agency deletion and Gricean maxim violation. The style is associated with one stylistic strategy – i.e. viewing actions and events – which

utilises two linguistic devices: thematisation and nominalisation. The persuasive style relies on the position of the news reporter in selling certain ideas in the news text to the reader. The style is also influenced by the ND issues and contexts identified earlier. The style is large used by both the NNPs and NDPs (especially, *Pioneer*). The style is generally realised through voice attribution and illocution. Two stylistic strategies, observed to be used by both the news reporters and news actors, have been identified in the data through which this style is achieved. They are: equating and contrasting, and hypothesising. The details of our findings can be summarised in the table below:

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**Table 5.3.7: Summary of chapter five**

s/n	Styles	Focus	Stylistic Strategies	Lexical Pattern / Choices	Contexts	Issues	News-papers
1	<b>EVAL</b>	Encounters, locations, news actors and roles are evaluated through metaphorisation & adjectivisation	<b>N/D</b>	Metaphorisation from the domains of military, crime and hunting; synonyms collocations Modification: evaluative nouns and adjectives	SOAC, PRR, SETT	ORC, ECO, ITE, POL	NNPs & NDPs
2	<b>MANI</b>	The reader is manipulated through agency deletion & Gricean-maxim violation	<b>V/AE</b>	Thematisation: a. introducing unconscious beings as IMA theme Nominalisation: a. lexical items bearing unconscious beings as Agents of material process; b. the changing lexical verb bearing the processes into existing entities	SOAC, PRR, SETT	ORC, ECO, ITE, POL	NNPs & NDPs, especially <i>Pioneer</i>
3	<b>PERS</b>	The reader is persuaded through voice attribution & illocution	<b>E/C</b>	a. Equating: appositional, metaphorical, and intensive relational equivalences; b. Contrasting: contrastive, negated, replacive, & concessive oppositions	SOAC, PRR, SETT	ORC, ECO, ITE, POL	all NNPs & <i>Pioneer</i>
			<b>H</b>	Epistemic modality:			



			<p>achieved through adverbs, adjective, auxiliaries, and lexical verb, which show likelihood or low certainty</p>			
			<p>Boulomaic modality: through conditional structures, lexical verbs, and modal auxiliaries, which express desire</p>			

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## CHAPTER SIX

### IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF STYLES AND STYLISTIC STRATEGIES

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we examine the ideological implications of the styles and stylistic strategies used by the news reporters in their presentation of ND conflict news reports. Three broad media ideologies have been observed in the data; namely, propagandist ideology, framist ideology, and mediator ideology. The ideologies and stylistic strategies shall be discussed one after another.

#### 6.2 Propagandist ideology

By propagandist ideology is meant a type of media ideology with a framework of social cognition and values that motivates media practitioners to popularise an idea or phenomenon in a way that is used to promote a biased political cause or point of view. The ideology, motivated by the persuasive style, is associated with two stylistic strategies. They are: naming and describing, and viewing actions and events. The propagandist ideology is observed to manifest in especially two media practices in the data; namely, the thematic representation of violence, and the roles of the participants involved in the ND conflict. Violence, of course, is found to be a recurrent theme in virtually all the newspaper reports making up our data. The news texts that do not directly focus on violence are found to be pre-occupied with issues related to previous violence or a threat of violence. The violence theme, as we shall demonstrate presently, has constantly been foregrounded as the central focus of the reports while other important issues necessitating it like political marginalisation (i.e. underdevelopment) and ecological impoverishment are relegated to the background. The truth is that, with the several and diverse image presentations of violence in the

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data, the news reports have succeeded in persuading the average reader into believing that the only activities going on the discourse are those of or related to violence. And as such, tailoring public opinions and people's perception on the nature, causes, and types of violence in the discourse is not far from the ideological representations of the news reporters and their respective organisations. Therefore, motivated by the propagandist ideology, violence has been represented at two dialectical levels: violence as war, and violence as threat. These will be taken in turn.

### **6.2.1 Representation of violence as war**

The presentation of violence as 'war' is associated with the two stylistic strategies; these are, naming and describing, viewing actions and events. The violent activities occur between the two interactive groups in the discourse: the FGN security officials and the oil-working community in the ND (as one group), and the different groups of the ND insurgents (as the other group). Three categories are named in the conflicts; namely, the conflicts (e.g. rescue and reprisal clashes, arrest attempts, etc which bring the two groups into violent contact with each other), the locations of the conflicts, and the roles of the participants in the conflicts. Metaphors and synonyms, which come mainly in form of collocation, prevail in the choices of noun group used in naming the categories, while troponyms and material actions dominate the transitivity choice employed in viewing action and events. The categories are presented with some examples from the data in the table below:

**Table 6.2.1: Categories named in violent conflicts**

s/n	Categories	Examples from the Data
1	<b>Conflict</b>	battle of supremacy, fierce gun battle, encounter (C12), all-out war (C19), offensive (A1), exchange of gun battle, exchange of gun fire (D11), confrontation (A12), oil war (C46), bloody battle, engagement, operation (C5), cordon search, rescue mission (C46), the drum of war (C50), military clampdown (C58), crackdown (C59), resistance, fire power, action (C5), fierce battle (D40), shooting, shoot out (C17), etc.
2	<b>Conflict</b> <b>Locations</b>	fortress, stronghold (C20), war theatre (C23), war situation (C46), oil city of Warri (C51), Camp 5 (C5), etc.
3	<b>Participants'</b> <b>Roles</b>	Struck (C4), opened fire (C13), invaded, seized (C18), close down (C26), forced out (D4), etc.

Two things can be pointed out from the examples given in Table 6.2.1; one, the conflicts and conflict locations are the most preponderantly named categories; the bulk of the noun groups is borrowed from the domain of military combat. The dominance of military metaphors in describing the categories here suggests the violence in question, but the hyperbolic use of the metaphors is hardly innocent; it is a conscious strategy of the news reporter to construct an image of war or a 'warring' situation. And as earlier highlighted, the choices of noun for naming the categories rely largely on metaphors (both fixed and non-fixed), which do not only provide opportunities for the reporters to blow the referents beyond proportion, but equally important to involve the reader's conceptual systems in viewing the violence in the ND region. Some examples in the data will be relevant here:

**Excerpt 1**

Ogbotobo community in Ekeremor ... of Bayelsa State was allegedly turned into a war theatre yesterday when security personnel stormed the area in search of four oil workers recently kidnapped.

It was gathered that the arrival of the security personnel in the oil bearing community was resisted by some armed youths in the area and this led to a gun battle. ... It was learnt that the heavy shooting lasted for several hours and when the smoke cleared, no fewer than 10 of the soldiers and five of the youths were feared dead. (Text C17 – *The Pointer* Jan. 18, 2006)

**Excerpt 2**

Men of the ... JTF Friday carried out a reprisal attack on militants at Oporoza ... to retaliate the killing of their colleagues and sinking of two JTF gunboats last Wednesday.

It was gathered that the soldiers, who deployed three military choppers and several gun boats, moved into Camp 5 by 10 a.m and bombarded the camp with all their military might.

The soldiers were said to have moved in on ground with artillery while the Air Force wing of the special security outfit gave an aerial cover, while the operation lasted.

It was gathered that the militants must have lost about 300 of their men to the rampaging operatives of the Joint Task Force, but reports have it that the militants had retaken the Camp 5, Friday.

...

The bloody operation which began at Oporoza with little resistance, later moved to Camp 5 where there was exchange of gun battle with the militants.

(Text C3 – *Pioneer* May 18, 2009)

The first thing that calls the attention of the reader in the texts is that the bulk of the noun groups appears in collocations that will ordinarily not co-occur in many other discourses except in the context of the ND conflict, and probably in the domain of military combat. Therefore, such collocations as “gun battle”, “heavy shooting” (in Excerpt 1), “bloody operation”, and “exchange of gun battle” (in Excerpt 2) describe the conflicts; others like “war theatre” and “smoke” (in Excerpt 1) capture what the conflict locations look like, probably after the conflict; while other lexical verbs like “turned into”, “stormed”, “resisted” (in Excerpt 1), “deployed”, “moved into”, “bombarded” “moved in on ground”, “gave an aerial cover”, “lost”, “retaken” (in Excerpt 2) pick out the specific roles played by the participants. (The noun group will be taken first). Notice the peculiar choices of noun groups, especially the evaluative adjectives (e.g. “heavy”, “bloody”) and nouns (e.g. “gun” and “gun battle”) modifying them. A few military terms (e.g. “gun”, “shooting”, etc) may not be unusually significant because they are after all involved in the conflicts, and there may be no milder or harsher ways to describe them. However, the prevalent choices of such emotive metaphors as “heavy”, “bloody”, “battle”, “exchange of gun fire”, “war theatre”, “smoke”, (and even in the verb category) “stormed” and “bombarded”, are implicit instantiations of the writers’ opinions, which is not inconsistent with the idea of embellishing the ND violence beyond the reality. Aside the mental picture created in the reader with the evaluative modifiers and emotive metaphors, the reporters’ purpose is further strengthened with over-lexicalisation in terms of synonymy. For example, “heavy” and “bloody” are loosely synonymous just as their noun group realisations (“heavy shooting” and “bloody operation”) are used in the same way as “gun battle”, “exchange of gun battle”, and “operation” in the texts. This is another strategy to remind and hence persuade the reader that there is war in the ND region: *that the Nigerian troops (JTF) employing “all their military might” to wage the war in the region.*

On the part of the roles of the participants, there is the preponderance of the material process, which is not unexpected considering the militarised terms (discussed above) associated with the conflicts and their locations; it should therefore follow that the roles of the participants will entail physical action. However, what particularly interests us is the popular sense relational pattern of the lexical verbs in the texts, which falls in line with troponymy. Troponyms, in Geerearts’ (2010: 160) view,

“involve specific ways of doing an action”, especially geared toward a unified purpose. In Excerpt 2, therefore, such verbal items as “deployed”, “moved into”, “moved in on ground”, “gave an aerial cover”, and “bombarDED the camp”, do not only engage physical action, they also all involve a movement action, and more importantly for their relation, they are all geared toward the same unified purpose: “bombarding the ND militants’ camp. Therefore, the use of the troponymous relations here is hardly innocent; it goes to suggest that the violence is not merely that of some ND community youths but that it involves a massive and organised military movements and war tactics against the ND insurgents. Attributing an agency of this magnitude to the FGN security officials appears contrary to the predominant pattern of backgrounding their violent actions in the data; but as can be surmised from the first paragraph of the text, the military actions are aimed at “retaliating the killing of their colleagues and sinking of two JTF gun boats”. Nominalising (making them unarguable) the ND youths’ actions (“killing” and “sinking”) readily necessitates and legitimises whatever military actions taken by the JTF, and is at the same time made to look like they are doing their job well (more of this particular idea will be explored under Framist Ideology).

Generally, what then immediately strikes us is that while all these metaphorical and synonymous noun groups and troponymous material verbs are used to describe just two encounters (going by Excerpts 1 and 2) between the Nigerian JTF soldiers and the ND insurgents, they have also been variously chosen to potentially allow access to multiple source domains of war relating to hostile actions conducted by two military camps. The semantic fields of war constructed with the nominal items will quickly make the reader to conceptualise the degree of ‘war’ in the ND that would involve the military. Therefore, the underlying idea of the news texts is to relate to the reader and the outside world the bloody and lethal nature of the violence enacted in the military encounters with the ND youths. These exaggerated images of violence painted in the news texts are one of the many strategies that the news reporters use to create half-truth constructions of a war situation, thereby necessitating FGN’s deployment and sustaining of the JTF troops in the ND region, which goes against the democratic ideology that it holds.

### 6.2.1 Representation of violence as threat

The violence spread in the discourse, as has just been described, is also constructed as ‘threat’, which in turn trifurcates into: threat to the peaceful co-existence of innocent citizens in the region (social), threat to the economic progress of Nigeria (economic), and by implication, threat to the corporate image of Nigeria in the world (inter-relational). This representation of violence also deals with the two stylistic strategies earlier identified. However, while the social threat is constructed with the naming and describing strategy through purposive modification of the noun group, the economic and inter-relational threats are projected with the strategy of viewing actions and events, which is in turn marked by ‘intentional’ material actions and hyponymy.

Noun modification is one of the naming devices (of the naming and describing strategy) through which violence has been presented as social threat in the discourse, by structurally packaging opinionated information on the head noun. This information-giving is motivated by two things: first, by the need to introduce the entities existing in the news, and to summarise past events to influence the reader’s views of new events. Let us consider the noun groups in the following excerpts from the data:

#### **Excerpt 3**

An eleven-year old son of a top businessman in Port Harcourt, Master Chidi Nsirim, has been abducted by four unknown gunmen, killed police escort on the spot.  
(Text D3 – *Pioneer* April 9, 2008)

#### **Excerpt 4**

The wave of abduction of oil workers by militant youths sweeping through the oil-producing Niger Delta was felt in the coastal area of Ondo State yesterday as five oil workers of Express Oil and Gas Limited, an indigenous oil firm, were abducted by youths.  
(Text D49 – *The Guardian* March 31, 2008)

The clause in Excerpt 3 is a case of passive transformation. It comprises a NG (“An eleven-year old son of a top businessman in Port Harcourt, Master Chidi Nsirim”) as the logical Object of the passive verb (“has been abducted”) and another NG (“four unknown gunmen”) as its logical Subject, which in turn contains a relative clause (“[who] killed police escort on the spot”). Excerpt 4 is also made up of two NGs: the grammatical Subject (“The wave of abduction of oil workers by militant youths sweeping through the Niger Delta”), and a prepositional phrase (from “in the



coastal area” to the end). The long PP includes another NG (“the coastal area of Ondo State”), an adverb (“yesterday”), and a relative clause (from “as” to “youths”), which in turn holds two NGs (“five oil workers of Express Oil and Gas Limited, an indigenous oil firm”) and (“youths”). Some of the NGs in the two texts can further be analysed in the following ways (the syntactic breakdown here is meant to clearly point out the lexical items in the noun groups):

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**Table 6.2.2: Structure of noun group in Excerpts 3 and 4**

<b>NOUN GROUP</b>			
<b>SLOT 1:</b> <b>Determiner/ Enumerator</b>	<b>SLOT 2: Pre-Head Modification</b>	<b>SLOT 3: Head Noun</b>	<b>SLOT 4: Post-Head Modification</b>
<b>Excerpt 3</b>			
An	eleven-year old	son	of a top businessman in Port Harcourt, Master Chidi Nsirim
Four	unknown	gunmen	[who] killed police escort on the spot
<b>Excerpt 4</b>			
The		wave	of abduction of oil workers by militant youths sweeping through the Niger Delta
the	coastal	area	of Ondo State
Five	Oil	workers	of Express Oil and Gas Limited, an indigenous oil firm

From the breakdown, it is observed that the two texts are characterised by heavy use of the modification SLOTS (especially SLOT 4), which is largely used for the supply of information on SLOT 3 (head noun). However, these information-packaging slots, in corroboration with Wright and Hope's (1996: 3) assertion, have been textually utilised for the functions earlier identified: providing additional information. Thus, by incorporating the extra innocuous and factual information about the news actors in SLOT 2 and SLOT 4 (in Excerpt 2), for example, it is clearly intended to introduce the reader to the various entities there are in the news event. Thus, instead of reading that: *a son has been abducted by gunmen*, the extra information adds the age ("eleven-year old"), whose son ("of a top businessman in Port Harcourt"), the name of the son ("Master Chidi Nsirim"), on the one hand; and on the other, the identity of the gunmen ("unknown"), and even other things they did in the process ("killed police escort on the spot). But the core message of the clause (that strikes the reader) is in the pre-modification slot ("eleven-year-old"), which is intended to expose the degree of desperation and ruthlessness – and by implication, aggression – of the abductors. The pre-modifier here goes to suggest that the abduction in the ND has taken another turn to the worse for it to have been extended to an 'infant' of eleven years old. The post-modification slot, precisely with the rank-shifted relative clause ("sweeping through the Niger Delta"), is utilised for this strategy. Thus, instead of reading: *the wave of abduction of oil worker by militant youths* alone, the extra information this time packages the past negative events happening in the discourse. Therefore, the whole point about the strategy of naming and describing at this level is that items are brought into the noun group, either as metaphors or noun modifiers, to not only construct an image of violence as the predominant activities going on in the ND conflict discourse, but also to exaggerate it, as they persuade the reader and the outside world, that the average activities of the ND youths constitute serious threat to the innocent citizens and the foreign oil-working community in the region. With regard to the construction of violence as economic and inter-relational threats, let us examine the following excerpts:

### **Excerpt 5**

Yesterday's unrest is seen as the most serious since militants attacked industry sites in what they dubbed a six-day "oil war" eight months ago.

...

Violence in the delta has cut Nigeria's oil output by about a fifth since early 2006, forcing foreign firms to remove all but essential employees and eaten into Nigeria's foreign earnings, exacerbating the impact of the global downturn.

(Text C24 – *THISDAY* May 16, 2009)

### **Excerpt 6**

The unrest in the oil-rich Niger Delta region has continued to take its toll on Nigeria's crude oil production and export, as ... (MEND) on Sunday blew up a crude oil facility belonging to the United States oil major, Chevron.

The militant group also seized a chemical tanker and detained its six-man crew 20 miles off the Escravos in Delta State.

This brings to two the number of attacks carried out by MEND on oil platforms in the last two days as the militant group had also on the same day attacked a Shell oil well in the Cawthron Channel around Bonny in Rivers State.

The attacks came as crude oil price fell to a five-week low near \$64 a barrel in early trading yesterday pressured by doubts over prospects of an early global economic recovery and a firmer dollar. (Text A29 – *THISDAY* Jul. 7, 2009)

The texts above encapsulate the categories of violence as threat constructed in the data. For example, by the choice of such nominal collocations that portray the impact of violence in the Delta on "Nigeria's oil output", "Nigeria's foreign earnings", and "global downturn" (in Excerpt 5), "Nigeria's crude oil production and export", "crude oil facility" and "crude oil price" (in Excerpt 6), the reader's attention is quickly taken to the economic disadvantages Nigeria incurs from the violence in the ND region. At another level, such representations of violence as causing "unrest", "foreign firms to remove all but essential employees" (in Excerpt 5), the seizure and detention of "six-man crew", and the numerous synonymous representational effects of violence, the reader is persuaded with enough clues to enrich the possible threat constituted to Nigeria's foreign image. For example, consider (in Excerpt 5) the choice of such verbs (beginning the propositions) as "cut", "eaten into", "forcing" and "exacerbating", as co-hyponymous terms used in presenting the hyperonymous effect of the violence (i.e. "attack" by militants). By describing them, first, in terms of such metaphors as "cutting" and "eating into" (where another reporter of different value

system might have chosen other more neutral lexemes like ‘reducing’ and ‘affecting’, respectively), an injurious imagery is conjured. Then, the preference for such hyperbolic terms as “forcing” (signifying ‘physical coercion’), and “exacerbating” (meaning ‘to worsen’) to some more modest terms like ‘making’ and ‘increasing’, together with the destructive image conjured in the text, is targeted toward heightening both the impact and the magnitude of threat intended.

In fact, to better appreciate what the texts is made to do, the transitivity choice of the verbs can further be analysed. Still examining the construction of violence as threat, the verbs choices across the main and embedded clauses in the two texts are presented on the table below:

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**Table 6.2.3: Transitivity choices in Excerpts 5 and 6**

<b>Excerpt</b>	<b>Lexical Verb</b>	<b>Process Type</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Instantiation</b>	<b>Process Dimension</b>
5a	Seen	Mental	empty	empty	perception
b	Attacked	Material	militants	conscious being	intentional
c	Dubbed	Verbal	militants	conscious being	verbal
d	Cut	Material	violence	unconscious being	intentional
e	Forcing	Material	violence	unconscious being	intentional
f	to remove	Material	foreign firms	conscious being	intentional
g	eaten into	Material	violence	unconscious being	intentional
h	exacerbating	Material	violence	unconscious being	intentional
6a	to take	Material	unrest	unconscious being	intentional
b	blew up	Material	MEND	conscious being	intentional
c	Belonging	Relational	Oil facility	unconscious being	possessive
d	Seized	Material	MEND	conscious being	intentional
e	Detained	Material	MEND	conscious being	intentional
f	Brings	Material	Empty	Empty	intentional
g	carried out	Material	MEND	conscious being	intentional
h	Attacked	Material	MEND	conscious being	intentional
i	Came	Material	The attack	unconscious being	intentional
j	Fell	Material	oil price	unconscious being	event
k	Pressured	Material	doubts	unconscious being	intentional

The table clearly shows an undue preponderance of the material action as it is our focus. The last column of the table specifies the dimensions of the processes in terms of material action event (MAE – the happening process, especially to inanimate actors), intentional material action (IMA – voluntary action by conscious beings), and superventional material action (SMA – unintentional actions by conscious being) (Simpson, 1993; see also Chapter Five). With this form in mind, the strategy of not only associating material actions with unconscious beings, but also with the intentional dimension offers great stylistic implications. For example, in the texts above, the material actions by conscious beings like “militants *attacking...*”, “the firm *removing...*” (in Excerpt 5), and “MEND...*blowing up...seizing...detaining...carrying out...attacking...*” (in Excerpt 6) are not interesting in this regard. However, particularly significant is the effect-of-violence aspects of the texts, where the material actions are maintained for unconscious entities like “violence” (5d, e, f, h, in the table) and its synonyms: “the unrest” (6a) and “the attack” (6i). That notwithstanding, and also contrary to the form, the unconscious entities are still made (to have intentional dimension) Agents of the material actions. The news reporters here appear to have stretched the structure of material process far enough to suit their purpose, namely, to overstress the effect of the violence in the ND region as economic, social, and political threat to the country.

As if the metaphorical (destructive and hyperbolic) verbs and intentional material actions are unsatisfactory in projecting the threat caused by violence, another set of lexicalisation in numbers and statistics are employed in the texts to embroider the threats. Underlined in such expressions as “the most serious since militants attacked industry sites in what they dubbed a six-day “oil war” eight months ago” (in Excerpt 5), “has continued to take its toll”, “two...attacks carried out by MEND...in the last two days”, and “crude oil price fell to a five-week low near \$64 a barrel” (in Excerpt 6), are lexical items “associated with a well-known number game of crime reporting in the media” (Fowler, 1991:16). This does not imply that the statistics is necessarily incorrect nor the numbers subjective, rather they both signal an increasing size of the threat, and hence imply that the reader sees it as credible. This tendency to quantify the impact of violence in numbers and statistics is hinged on an ideology that is motivated by propaganda: *to associate the ND struggle and violence with threat, if*

*only by quantity*. One interesting explanation for this is that the constant reader of the ND conflict news will hardly (or may never) find instances in the news texts where such issues as struggle for ownership and control of resources, mass poverty, or human rights abuses in the ND region are foregrounded or constructed as threatening Nigeria's political and/or international image. Only on very rare occasions in the data have references been made to socio-cultural, ecological or health threats of the violence (between the JTF and the ND youth activists) to the local ND communities. The excerpt below features one of the very few instances of agitation for the effects of violence on Benikrukru, one of the ghastly affected Ijaw communities, was reported in *The Punch* albeit at the bottom of the report:

**Excerpt 7**

... the people of Benikrukru have petitioned the United Nations over the continued attack on their community by JTF.

In a petition to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon signed by the Executive Chairman of Benikrukru community ... the community urged UN to call the Federal Government to order by ordering the stoppage of "genocidal campaign" against Ijaw communities, saying Benikrukru does not have any problem with the military JTF or the militants.

They wondered why the onslaught between the JTF and militants should lead to death and untold hardship in their community.

The people urged the UN to prevail on the Federal Government to halt the massacre of the Ijaw while also calling for the institution of a probe panel to look into the immediate and remote causes of hostilities between JTF and militants.

(Text C31 – *The Punch* Jul. 3, 2007)

There are some interesting points about this testimonial that counterfactualise the foregrounding picture of the violence predominantly painted in the data. First, is that the violence is also a threat (involving death and mass interment) to the ND communities where it takes place; and that the effects it has on these communities is even a greater social and inter-relational threat to Nigeria, especially as it has been petitioned to the UN. These can be explained by the choice of such lexical items as "genocidal campaign", "death", "untold hardship" and "massacre" in the text. Secondly, the recommendation of a probe into the immediate and remote causes of the ND conflict reverberates the fact that there are fundamental issues in the ND case, which need to be settled before peace can reign in the region. These issues are known



by all the stakeholders, but the FGN will rather avoid dialogue like a national conference or other media of settling the issues, but prefer the use of force and even propaganda. Hence, one of FGN law enforcement agents, motivated by this same dominant ideology, was echoed to have said:

**Excerpt 8**

He [JTF Maritime Component Commander] said excessive criminality of the youths was embarrassing and the blackmail, extortion and killing by militants must come to an end in order for peace and progress to reign in the region.  
(Text C31 – *The Punch* Jul. 3, 2007)

Notice the clear contrast in ideological viewpoints (with respect to violence in the ND) between the FGN and the ND youths and communities, which in a way, are different from what is largely upheld in our newspaper reports; although that of the FGN is relatable to the media's in many respects, as we will clearly see below under Framist Ideology. For the ND communities in Excerpt 7, probing into the issues (e.g. “immediate and remote causes of hostilities”) is the only way forward, whereas for the FGN in Excerpt 8, putting an end to the excessive criminality of the ND youths (e.g. “blackmail, extortion and killing by militants”) is the only way that “peace and progress [can] reign in the region”.

The role of the media here (going by our data), as has been demonstrated so far, is to make the violence to be regarded as war going on between the two group; and that this war has become a threat to the nation. However, even when motivated by this propagandist ideology, viewing violence as threatening the social, economic, and international image of Nigeria (and NOT threatening cultural, psychological and even economic fabrics of the ND region), one should ordinarily expect to see the equitable logic in bringing the two parties involved in the violence to blame. It is, however, interesting how the same violence is still constructed as excusably used by the Nigerian JTF to confront the perceived enemies of the state and perpetrators of the ‘threat’. In the excerpts below, we examine how the roles of the participants have been represented in the encounters between the JTF and the ND youths:

### **Excerpt 9**

The ceasefire between the Federal Government and Niger Delta militant youths following the release of the kidnapped foreign oil workers after series of negotiation broke down yesterday when armed youths engaged men of the Joint Military Task Force on the Niger Delta (JTF) in a bloody battle at Tunu and Benisede Flow Stations in Ekeremor ... of Bayelsa State.

Although the casualty figure could not be ascertained at press time last night, the JTF reinforced from Warri and the battle raged on in the creeks. (Text C26 – *THISDAY* Mar. 31, 2006)

### **Excerpt 10**

The clash occurred in Ekeremor axis in a border village between youths, who in an attempt to dislodge the military men who were on patrol, opened fire on them.

According to the reports, the military men, who were already at alert, were said to have replied them in equal terms, using their mastery of the lethal weapons to overpower the militants.

(Text C13 – *The Tide* Aug. 22, 2006)

(A little syntactic analysis will enhance the analysis of the lexical choices). In the text in Excerpt 9, two main material processes are used; namely, “engaged” and “reinforced”. The first “engaged” involves “armed youths” (as Agent) and “men of the Joint Military Task Force...” (as Goal). Here, with the agency of the action, as is the predominant case in the data, explicitly attributed to the ND youths, the FGN security forces are thus presented as the victims: as the ones being engaged (literally dragged) in the bloody battle. However, interestingly in the second paragraph of the same text, the material process “reinforced”, of course, is associated with the JTF (as Agent), but there is no specific Goal or victim of the material process borrowed from the domain of military combat. The only effect of the JTF’s action (of reinforcement) that the writer has made available is that it made the “battle rage on”, which is not attributable toward any tangible goal. Clearly, the choice of an intransitive verb (which allows the writer to comfortably delete its object or victim) here, as against the transitive type (“engaged”) associated with the ND youths, is not without ideological consequences. It is meant to play down on the government’s violence; or even making the reader see the role of the JTF in the conflict as almost not involving violence at all. However, the essence of reinforcement in military parlance is not far to seek.

A similar pattern, as in many instances in the data, is observed in the situation presented in Excerpt 10, with the two material actions that matter “opened fire” and “replied” respectively associated with the ND youths and the military. Again, notice

the choice of a softer but vague intransitive verb (“replied”, in representing the involvement of the military) which requires only an advanced semantic entailment process to understand the outcome of replying an action (of opening fire) in “equal terms”. And subsequently, “using their mastery of the lethal weapons to overpower the militants” may have involved more dire consequences for the actions of the military; but all these are carefully backgrounded, while that of the ND youths is purposely foregrounded with a concrete metaphor (“opened fire”) to call attention of the reader to it. Excerpts 9 and 10 generally, explain the one-sided manner that the agency of the violent activities has been represented in the roles of the participants involved in the ND conflicts.

Through the naming and describing and viewing actions and events strategies, and motivated by the propagandist ideology, violence is exaggerated as war, first, and the war is constructed as threat to the social, economic and inter-relational status of Nigeria backgrounding the other ND issues like the environment, culture and psychology of the indigenes of the region that the violence may also have affected. Furthermore, one (the ND insurgent groups) out of the two parties that are basically involved in the violent activities, is chiefly represented as the perpetrators of the violence by projecting their actions largely with concrete metaphors, while the actions of the FGN security officials are presented mainly with softer and goalless verbs. However, while violence is popularised in the media as ND militants’ threat to Nigeria’s socio-economic and political progress, it is particularly interesting how ND sympathisers view it: as a “legitimate and inevitable manifestation of social justice” (Ayoola, 2010: 27). It is in this line that one of the members of the South-south delegation to the National Political Reforms Conference (NPRC) held in Abuja in July 2005, Professor G.G. Darah, of course motivated by a different ideology, argued that “armed struggle is not synonymous with violence.” Rather, he continued, “Violence is a concept used by the oppressor to describe the action of the oppressed” (Ayoola, 2010: 28).

### **6.3 Framist ideology**

Framist ideology is seen here as a kind of media ideology whose structure of social cognition and reference, as for example shared by the news reporters in our data, allows media practitioners to attach their assessment on the entities in the news in a

way that will present the entities in positive or negative light. The ideology is largely motivated by the evaluative style. The framist ideology manifests in two stylistic practices observed in the data; namely, the representation of news participants, and the intentions behind their actions in the discourse as positive or negative with regard to the issues in the conflict discourse. The ideology is, therefore, associated with one stylistic strategy, that is: naming and describing, which aids the news reporters in evaluating and framing the news participants and their intentions.

### **6.3.1 Representation of news participants in positive/negative dimension**

The stylistic strategy utilised for this, as earlier highlighted, is naming and describing, which is in turn marked by three lexical devices: evaluative adjectives, metaphors, and labels, which largely appear as synonyms and collocations. One major difference between the naming and describing strategy here and the one motivated by propagandist ideology, as we shall distinguish presently in the analysis, is that: the stylistic focus of framing is evaluating news participants and the intentions behind their actions in terms of either condemning or approving them. However, the textual focus of propaganda is directed particularly at violent conflicts and participant roles with regard to constructing them as war and/or threat.

As earlier pointed out, two major groups of news participants have been identified in the ND conflict discourse, *viz.* the FGN group (including its law enforcement agencies, and the multinational oil companies and their workers), and the ND group (embracing the various insurgent groups and their sympathisers). The FGN and the multinational oil companies, by virtue of being in a business relationship, share similar ideologies, and are thus presented as one group. We therefore have the FGN, presented in a number of ways: politically, as the dominant group, projecting its globalising and capitalist ideologies in a bid to utilise the oil revenue to boost its economic value; for its intentions, presented as the good side, not only making efforts to protect the lives and properties of people in the ND region, but also to reabsorb the ND group back into the society (through, for example, ‘the amnesty programme’), by rehabilitating, retraining, and empowering them to become better and responsible citizens of the country; they are again constructed as having good plans (through, for example, ‘seven-point agenda’ of the Yar’Adua administration) for the development of the ND region. The ND insurgent group is politically represented as the minority

group, heterogeneous, irresponsible, unemployable, and made up of illiterate camps of youths who have resorted to the formation of numerous militant nationality groups, the most active of which include Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and Joint Response Command (JRC). The group is made to be regarded as not strictly supported by their local communities; but rather supported by some political enemies within and outside the government. Some examples from the data are relevant to corroborate some of these:

**Excerpt 11**

At least six expatriates of different nationalities have been reported kidnapped by hoodlums in Rivers State....

...

The expatriates were said to have been through Finima waterways to unknown destination, while yesterday another gang of faceless hoodlums kidnapped two expatriate staff of a company operating along Borokiri axis....

Briefing journalists in his office yesterday the state Commissioner of Police ... said men of the underworld who came in a speed boat, took the expatriates across the creek....

(Text D21 – *The Tide* Aug. 11, 2006)

**Excerpt 12**

Apart from kidnapping the oil workers, the youths who are reportedly armed to the teeth, according to a close source, also seized SPDC Drilling Rig –A1 and blocked all the roads leading to the rig's campsite....

All efforts made by Shell to at least evacuate the held workers through the rig site, the only access route to the area, proved abortive as the fierce-looking youths mounted over 20 barricades as checkpoints on the roads to frustrate any movement in that area. (Text D46 – *The Guardian* Jul. 26 1999)

**Excerpt 13**

Suspected militants struck afresh yesterday in Bayelsa State, seizing the Tebidaba flow station....

The latest seizure launched by heavily armed militants, who were said to have overpowered security operatives on guard duty, might not be unconnected with disagreement over the non-implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)....

(Text A25 – *Vanguard* Nov. 7, 2006)

#### **Excerpt 14**

Delta State Waterways and Security Committee (DWSC) ... rescued a man identified as Engineer Ben ... kidnapped by a seven-man gang in Udu ... Delta State at the last weekend.

The committee also nabbed three of the kidnapers who demanded for N20 million ransom....

A source hinted that Ben was kidnapped ... by the gangsters and some residents reported the incident to the police....

But when no immediate help came from the police ... the victim was made to speak to his close friends, narrating his ordeal and demand of ransom by the abductors.

(Text B28 – *Vanguard* Jan. 4, 1999)

Like in many instances in the data where they have been associated with such derogatory labels as “bandits” (B14, 15), “terrorists” (D24, 51), “vandals” (A10, 11), “criminals” (B16, 19), the ND insurgent youths have also variously been labelled in the excerpts above with such critical synonyms as “hoodlums”, “gang”, “men of the underworld” (in Excerpt 11), “militants” (in Excerpt 13), “kidnappers”, “abductors”, and “gangsters” (in Excerpt 14). They have also been described with such subjective metaphors as “faceless” (in Excerpt 11), “fierce-looking”, “armed to the teeth” (in Excerpt 12), and “heavily armed” (in Excerpt 13). As we earlier pointed out in the previous section, there are a few justifiable terms (that may not hold much promise of stylistic relevance) like “kidnappers” or “abductors” (in Excerpt 14) based on the semantic logic obtainable when people engage in kidnapping or abducting. However, there may not be enough space to individually examine the semantics of the other stylistic terms, but obviously, the choice of such negative labels and metaphors to describe the youths is hardly innocent, and is not inconsistent with the assertion that the “belief of speakers influence their lexical selection” (van Dijk, 2005: 26). The ND youths are, therefore, framed as violent (seizing oil workers and their facilities), criminal (being in possession of arms), and (by implication) evaluated as threatening (frustrating) the social (free movement of oil workers) and economic progress (disrupting oil operations) of the country.

#### **6.3.2 Representation of news participants’ intentions in positive/negative dimension**

The negative opinions here, considering the issues of norm and ethics, are not without some lexical ‘hedges’ like reporting verb phrases “were said to have...”, adverbs “reportedly” (in Excerpt 12), and adjectives “suspected” (in Excerpt 13)

employed for impression management. However, considering the prevalent negative attitude of the news reporters about the ND youths, these hedges are subsequently abandoned in the texts to allow the reporters to better achieve their purpose. For example, in Excerpt 13, the text begins with the “*suspected* militant”, with the hedge brought in to control readers’ impression of the neutrality of the newspaper; but in the next occurrence of “militant”, which is less than one line, the hedge had been done away with. The framist opinions here are represented in the attitude the newspaper reporters have about the ND youths. This social attitude is, as expected, found to be shared by the FGN group; hence, the dominant access of direct quotations from the FGN group in the reports as another distancing device. In the excerpts below, like in many other in the data, FGN security agents are quoted to be presenting the ND youths in a similar way:

**Excerpt 15**

His [spokesman for the JTF, Major Sagir Musa] words: “Following a security report at our disposal as to the hideouts of one of the notorious militant leaders in the state by name Soboma George, members ... made a surprise attack...”  
(Text C9 – *The Tide* Aug. 17, 2007)

**Excerpt 16**

“JTF is only in the Niger Delta to maintain peace and we shall do it by making the region uncomfortable for criminals to operate”. (Text C24 – *THISDAY* May 16, 2009)

In the texts, the choice of such negatively evaluative terms as “notorious”, “militant” (in Excerpt 15), and “criminals” (in Excerpt 16), immediately betrays the security officials’ (and by extension FGN’s) negative attitude about the ND youths, who are here similarly framed as disreputable, unlawful and therefore evaluated as enemies of peace in the ND region. The opinions are akin to the ones identified with the newspapers above. Let us compare the various negative opinions of the ND youths with the ones projected for the FGN group in the data:

**Excerpt 17**

Some two weeks after the Federal Government ordered the military to sanitize militancy in the Niger Delta region, the Commander of the ... (JTF) and arrowhead of the operations ... has thrown light on how the alleged kingpin of the militants, chief Government Ekpemupolo (alias Tompolo) was flushed out of his military fortress.

The military topshot [sic] also opened up on how the alleged militant ran a parallel illegitimate administration headquarters in the creeks.

...

Speaking to newsmen at Oporoza ... the JTF boss vowed that no stone would be left unturned to fish out Tompolo from his hideout. (Text C15 – *The Pointer* May 31, 2009)

**Excerpt 18**

NEMA's Head of Public Relations ... quoted the JTF Maritime Component Commander as saying the army would flush out the criminal gangs responsible for the attack on military personnel and also put an end to frequent harassment of innocent people in the Niger Delta. (Text A31 – *The Punch* Jul. 3, 2007)

**Excerpt 19**

The ... (JTF) on the Niger Delta has arrested four persons for illegal bunkering activities.

Parading the suspects before newsmen ... the Commanding Officer of the 102 Battalion of the JTF ... described the acts of the men as an economic sabotage against the nation, adding that the stolen oil was intercepted at different locations in the state.

He said that now that the various groups in the region have accepted amnesty as granted by the Federal Government, oil theft as means of survival, but noted that the JTF is containing the situation. (Text B24 – *THISDAY* Oct. 29, 2009)

In Excerpt 17 above, in describing the participants, there are predominant choices of semantically neutral terms such as “arrowhead”, “kingpin”, “top shot”, and “boss” (which are all synonymous). It is, however, stylistically interesting how some of the terms (e.g. “arrowhead”, “top shot”, and “boss”) are associated with the FGN security official, co-textually framed as positive, the personnel in charge, determined, and thus presented as professionally competent in doing his job. Other value-laden expressions like “pillar of peace in the Niger Delta” (D17), “Operation Restore Hope” (C37, 51), etc., which are consistent with the framist ideology, have also been attached with the security agents in the data. On the other hand, the neutral term (i.e. “kingpin”) has “militant” attached to it in qualification, which is co-textually (going by the noun



group in apposition) and contextually (by the reader's knowledge of the script on militancy in the region) associated with a negative opinion. "Kingpin" here seems a bit milder than other evaluative adjectives like "fierce-looking" (in Excerpt 12) or "criminal" (in Excerpt 18), but it still has tinges of negative opinion related to it as used. In Excerpts 18 and 19, more of the activities and intentions of the participants are named, again with noticeable polarisation. The ND militant leader here is, therefore, framed as a person who is dangerous, not wanted in the community, and thus presented as worth chasing out of the community (probably) for peace to reign.

The activities of the ND insurgent youths are also not without an evaluative comment. Such evaluative adjectives as "*frequent harassment*" (in Excerpt 18), "*illegal bunkering*", "*economic sabotage*", and "*oil theft*" (in Excerpt 19) are really laden with value judgement, which for Matheson, is personal, subjective and inconsistent (2005: 16). To the average Nigerian, the "illegal" or "sabotage" script, just like 'corruption' in the political discourse, especially if constructed by the press, tends to overshadow common sense and the purpose of the ND resistance and reframe the identity of the ND youths as 'criminals', thereby legitimising whatever means the security officials have chosen in handling them. Thus, the conceptualisation of the intentions of the security officials in handling these 'negative' activities is not without some ideological implications. Notice such metaphors employed to loud these intentions as "leave no stone unturned", "fish out" (Excerpt 17), "flush out", "put an end" (in Excerpt 18), and "containing" (in Excerpt 18). Fishing out and flushing out the "criminal gang", for example, does not only leave much to be valued of the ND youths, but also necessitates the presence of the JTF in the region. Hence, the killing of the 'criminals' without the normal judicial process is justified because the FGN is battling to "put an end" to the situation. Very often, therefore, the general public, whose opinion about the supposed ND criminals has been negatively framed by the press, tends to support the rather illegal methods applied by the government and its security agencies in handling the 'illegality'. No wonder Britain, under Tony Blair in 2006, did not only offer to send troops to assist the JTF in the ND (Olorunyomi, 2007: 100), but it is also not unexpected that the United Nations was almost silent on the petition (by the ND Benikrukru community) about the activities of the JTF.

## 6.4 Mediator ideology

Mediator ideology, as used here, is a kind of media ideology with a structure of social cognition and professional norms, which mandates media practitioners to act as a go-between, especially in conflict situations. In spite of the textual practices earlier recognized as motivated by the idea to amplify ND violence as war/threat and to frame the news participants involved as positive or negative, other textual practices have also been observed in the data, which allow the reporters to project the views of the news participants that align with their purpose. This textual practice, motivated by the mediator ideology is dominated by the manipulative style, is realised in two folds; namely, the representation of news participant's positions on issues in the news as commendable/lamentable, and the representation of news participant's conditions in the discourse as (un)favourable. Two stylistic strategies are relevant here, *viz.* hypothesising, and equating and contrasting. While hypothesising relates to the representation of news participants' positions, equating and contrasting is associated with the representation of their conditions.

### 6.4.1 Representation of news participants' positions on issues as commendable/lamentable

The stylistic strategy of hypothesising here is marked by a tripartite linguistic model including the modality system (with epistemic meaning – expressing strong certainty, and boulomaic meaning – expressing desire), the concept of presupposition (including both existential and logical), and implicature (mainly for the threats, flouting maxims of quantity and relevance) (cf. Jeffries, 2010: 132). Hypothesising has to do with managing the group ideologies of the news participants through their verbal contributions in the news reports. The power of presenting the speeches of news participants is potentially very manipulative as their viewpoints have been observed to be mediated by news reporters to suit their (reporters') ideologies. Out of the four categories of the presentation of participants' positions observed in the data (e.g. report of speech – RS, report of speech act – RSA, indirect speech – IS, and direct speech – DS), the DS and IS are, however, the categories that hold more relevance for the stylistic strategy in question. The reason is because it is through them that the near-actual speeches of the news participants are presented, thereby making their viewpoints clear – though the other categories, which are still potentials for ideological

mediation, would be brought into the analysis. It is however the contextual meanings (such as hypothesising, assuming, and implying) realised from the news participants' voices that the reporters utilise in this strategy. For example, through specific lexical choices in their speeches, the news participants are presented to hypothesise the likelihood or desirability of future realities in the discourse. The linguistic system of modality is the major device observably used by the news participants for this textual function. Let us consider some instances from the data:

**Excerpt 20**

In a short remark at the occasion, President Yar'Adua said: ...  
"We *will* work together to ensure that youths in the Niger Delta have a meaningful life through the kind of programmes we will evolve....

We *will* not just say you drop your arms. We *will* sit down with you and know what are the problems ... then you *will* say these are the problems. We *will* work out a solution together with you.... This is the essence of the amnesty."

(Text B23 – *THISDAY* Oct. 2, 2009)

**Excerpt 21**

Meanwhile, the government has condemned the kidnap of Briggs, as a statement issued by the director of press affairs to the governor ... said: "The government *wishes* that those who *may be* holding Prof. Briggs hostage to release him unconditionally and unharmed."

(Text D9 – *New Waves* Dec. 17, 2004)

**Excerpt 22**

"No Idu graduate has been employed in NAOC since 1980. The few Idu indigenes that work in NAOC today were the persons employed as well-head operators in 1980 and we *think* that this is not proper. We *feel* marginalized despite our communities being major producers of oil and gas," he said.

(Text A17: *The Guardian* Sep. 3, 2005)

The text in Excerpt 20 is a reported statement of President Yar'Adua in 2009 while receiving one of the militant leaders who recently yielded to the president's amnesty. The news reporter here, to present a sensitive issue like 'amnesty for the Niger Delta' (that most reading public – especially the other ND youths in the creeks – expects the president's position on), brings in the president's direct speech on it. The lexicalisation of the epistemic modality here, represented with the continued use of the modal auxiliary "will", is seen as an expression of strong certainty. This vigorous assurance is relatively normal in political speeches; though the use of the first person

(plural) pronoun (“we”) here may suggest avoidance of direct responsibility, yet the news reporter still brings it in to align with the newspaper’s optimism for the resolution of the conflict in the region. The reporter’s projection of such a high degree of certainty is thus powerful in not only eliciting the compliance of the militants, but also hypothesising a reality to the reader, which will realise the government’s ideological position; namely, *that government is already in the process of putting an end to ND militancy, which has hitherto disrupted the economic progress of the country.*

The text in Excerpt 21 is extracted from a report on kidnap of a government functionary. There is the use of a lexical verb (“wishes”), which is of boulomaic modality to hypothesise the government’s desire for a *situation where the hostage is released and there will be no more kidnapping*. Also note the epistemic meaning created by the use of the modal auxiliary “may be”, meant to bring forth a reasoning where the captors will be motivated (to feel that they are not regarded as ‘criminals’ outright, but simply holding the professor hostage) to release the captive. The reporter here may have felt that the ‘reader’ may not be convinced enough through the report of the speech act (“the government has condemned...”) of the government’s statement on the issue alone. The reporter, therefore, brings in the actual voice of one of the ‘respected’ government’s representatives, who in turn echoes the desirability of the government. Thus, the reporter merges the newspaper’s ‘neutral’ stance (to condemn the crime and advise the perpetrators to reconsider) with the ideology of the government, voiced through the government official’s statement.

Through their speeches, the news participants make assumptions which allow them to lay their claims and defend their actions, while their threats are largely implied. Presupposition and implicature are, respectively, the linguistic devices identified here through which these assumptions and implications are derived. Let us consider the presuppositions and implicatures generated from the following text samples from the data:

**Excerpt 23**

“20 of them were arrested in the operation, and that is not based on suspicion, but facts, some of them have *initiation marks*, others *bullet wounds* from previous operations, and based on our daily experiences, we can easily identify them”, he said in defence of the arrest of 20 suspects.

(Text B23 – *The Tide* – Aug. 20, 2008)

#### **Excerpt 24**

“There will be no peace in the Niger Delta until our patriotic and esteemed leader is released from the gallows of evil Nigerian state. We shall make the Iraqi insurgents go green with envy. The Palestinians will come to us for mentoring, it shall come to pass”, the statement claimed.

(Text A20 – *The Guardian* May 22, 2006)

(The text in Excerpt 23 is a DS of a JTF commander taken from a news report on JTF raid on a suspected militant-harboring community resulting in the arrest of some ND youths). In the text, the assumptive noun groups have been underlined. There is no overt manipulative intention here, the two noun groups, by virtue of being definite noun groups, make entirely understandable presuppositions that such ‘facts’ (“initiation marks” and “bullet wounds”) exist. The reader is only presented with the proposition that both ‘facts’, found in the suspects, are not good ones. Perhaps, the only ideological assumption here, harnessed for the arrest defence, is that we usually would take people with such ‘facts’ as cultists or criminals or both. Particularly, in the case of the ND (i.e. also based on the daily experiences of the security officials, people with such ‘facts’ always are militants) the people perpetrating the crises, hiding under the cover of the community, should and have been arrested. In the report, therefore, the focus of the newspaper on the JTF commander alone (without featuring the voice(s) of the arrested youths or the community leaders/elders) is particularly remarkable. Especially interesting here is the projection of the ideological assumption through the commander’s viewpoint (speech), which a ‘neutral’ news report may ordinarily not accommodate. Thus, the reader – because the other party’s voice is not brought into the report – is potentially made to believe that the arrested youths are guilty/criminals.

There are three utterances making up the text in Excerpt 24, which is an on-line statement by MEND included in a report on the detention of a militant leader by the FGN. From the first (conditional) utterance, the reader will be able to process the surface meaning of the text, and access the implicature, which is a threat on the government to meet their request (namely, to release their leader – Asari Dokubo). But the second and third utterances would definitely task the reader’s knowledge beyond the text. By bringing the noun groups “Iraqi insurgents” (in the second utterance) and “The Palestinians” (in the third) the reader’s mind immediately goes to the Middle East, which is associated with mass violence and terrorist bombing. The utterances,

therefore, flout the maxims of quantity and manner by saying more than they should and not being straightforward, respectively. This flags up to the reader that there is something significant in the use of the noun groups. These imply (from the second utterance) that what the militants threaten to do will be worse than those done by the Iraqi insurgents, thereby making them (the Iraqis) to even want to learn from them (ND militants); and (for the third utterance) the Palestinians – known for their age-long fight over the land they believe is theirs – will visit them (the militants) for training. The implicature generated from the militants' threat will actually be interesting to any reader, especially with the involvement of the Middle-eastern pattern of (suicide) bombing to their struggle. Hence, the news reporter purposely brings in the DS of the militants' to allow not only the government but also the wider public access to the implied meaning of the utterance coming-to-pass of which is not something to ignore. The implication, therefore, is that by presenting the militants viewpoint directly with their solemn declaration ("it shall come to pass"), the news reporter may not necessarily be projecting the armed struggle-as-a-means-of-making-our-point ideology, but ensuring that the seriousness of the implicature may be readily assimilated by the reader and other stake holders of the ND conflict.

#### **6.4.2 Representation of news participants' conditions as (un)favourable**

For the equating and contrasting strategy here, equating is triggered by appositional equivalence and intensive relational equivalence, while contrasting is marked by negated opposites and contrastives. This stylistic strategy is observed at two levels; namely, the strategies used by the news reporters (writers), and those by the news participants themselves. The general pattern, however, is that whereas many unfavourable conditions faced by some participants in the news are exposed through creating new equivalences, certain ideological impression built on some people or issues are countered through creating oppositions. With regard to relaying the unfavourable conditions of the news participants in the discourse, two syntactic triggers have been identified through which equivalence is textually constructed in the data: appositional equivalence (making use of apposition convention), and intensive relational equivalence (involving the copula verb 'to be'). These devices for equivalence are observed to be utilised by the news participants in the representation

of their experiences. Let us consider the structure of the following text sample from the data:

**Excerpt 25**

“This spillage was a catastrophe! Hundreds have lost their lives; tens of thousands have lost their livelihoods. People have become impoverished, communities have become uninhabitable, yet Exxon Mobil has continued to pay deaf ears to the pitiable plight of a now pained and severely exploited people,” said the group. (Text A22 – *The Punch* Mar. 11, 2006)

**Excerpt 26**

“We were all asked to lie on the floor, face down. We were battered, bullied and harassed mercilessly until the next morning. They never ceased firing their guns, it was a horrifying experience.” (Text D41 – *The Guardian* Nov. 9, 2006)

**Excerpt 27**

“The government promised us and failed us before, the companies promised us and failed us. If they fail us again, we will go back to normal duty,” Oloye told Associated Press. (Text B1 – *Pioneer* Aug. 23, 2009)

One important fact to reiterate here is that the texts above, like a few others in the data, are brought in by the reporter for particular ideological purposes; in this case, to allow the reading public access into the experiences of the people in the ND. The first clause of the Excerpt 25 and the last in Excerpt 26 are cases of intensive relational equivalence. Through the use of the copula verb “was”, two unrelated ideas, for example, “spillage” and “catastrophe” (in the case of Excerpt 25) are placed (related as participants of the process) in the same position in the clause structure, thereby equating them. Here, the Predicator (“was”) opens the Subject (“This spillage”) up and the expectation, in the context of relating the terrible nature of the spillage, is that there will at least be equivalence, if not exactitude in the Complement position. The convenient ‘mode’ of English grammar, that Complements may be either adjectival (which could have still made the clause end with ‘catastrophic’ by doing away with the indefinite article “a”) or nominal (“a catastrophe”), means that we end up with an implied proposition that *oil spillage was a plague to the lives and livelihood of the ND communities*, though this is not explicitly stated.

Also ideologically interesting are the pairs of clauses that make up the rest of the text (in Excerpt 25). These clauses are based on appositional equivalence by their

positions in parallel structures, with otherwise identical wording. The reader is immediately affected by one thing among these clauses; namely, that the convention of apposition – where items are supposed to have the same referent – is violated. Looking at the first pair of clause in the text (“Hundreds have lost their lives; tens of thousands have lost their livelihoods”), for example, we have superventive material processes with unintentional actions by the Actors, who refer to the same ND community people. However, the Goals of the processes do not have the same referent. Although the Goals (“lives” and “livelihood”) have a morphological relationship, they would normally not be seen as having any similar semantics. ‘Life’ (the singular form of “lives”) is normally a synonym of ‘existence’, whereas “livelihood” is closer in meaning (out of this context) to ‘source of income’. Therefore, the loss that many people in the ND communities have, however, is equated first with their “lives”, and then with their “livelihood” – a powerful manipulative imagery for baring the hopeless conditions of people living in the ND. Thus, the result is a logical shift of equating the loss of lives of uncountable people in the region with the loss of the means of their livelihood, and this becomes the message of the text, albeit not explicitly stated. The next pair of clauses (“People have become impoverished, communities have become uninhabitable...”) has a similar effect but the reader has some critical work to do here. Ultimately, the ideology of the reporter is aligned with those of the news participants; hence, allowing the reader to get the experiences from the horse’s mouth.

Another related strategy identified in the data is countering ideological labels attached to some group of news participants in the discourse. This is done through the construction of opposition (contrasting). This linguistic practice is used mainly by the news reporters themselves, of course, echoing the conditions of particular news participants. In this regard, two syntactic triggers of opposition are found in the data, viz. negated opposition, and contrastive. Let us examine the syntactic frame of the following text samples from the data:

**Excerpt 28**

The leader of the militants, “General” Martins, explained that his men were freedom fighters and not criminals who only expressed anger over the lack of development in the Niger Delta. (Text D16 – *New Waves* Oct. 9, 2004)



**Excerpt 29**

The legal adviser to the militants, Mr. Ayewunmi Wole, charged the committee not to abandon the boys....

He claimed that they [the ND militants] are not criminals but should be seen as freedom fighters, fellow Nigerian citizens who fought to register their displeasure to the Federal Government.

(Text B2 – *Pioneer* Apr. 10, 2009)

The text in Excerpt 28 and the second paragraph of the one in Excerpt 29 are based on negated opposition. However, while the negated opposition in Excerpt 28 employs a positive/negative pair structure the one in Excerpt 29 uses the reverse, negative/positive pair structure, to set up an opposition between two apparently unrelated entities. The likely semantic gap which might hinder the two items being seen as opposites is filled by the context of the ND struggle. Note that naming (specifically, with evaluative metaphor) is significant here, as there are some group ideologies to the nouns (opposites named), with one (the ND youths being regarded as “criminals”) as an improper impression of the condition of a people who have to struggle for what they believe is theirs; and the other (seeing the youths as “freedom-fighters” – in apposition to “fellow Nigerian citizens” in Excerpt 29) as a necessary thing to be for their survival, which, given the same condition, everybody would be nearly the same. By setting up this pair of opposites, the text is thus intended to suggest that *regarding a people, who have to struggle to let the government know about their unbearable condition as criminals, is not fair*. Let us compare the structure of opposition discussed above with the one in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 30**

Thereafter, Mr. David Ward was questioned and he informed us that throughout his 55 day in captivity, from August 10 to October 4, 2007, he was not harmed but his life at various times was threatened by his abductors.

(Text D42 – *THISDAY* Oct. 6, 2007)

Also particularly significant to our subject of enquiry here (how oppositions are set up in our data) is the portion of the text in Excerpt 30 which says that “... he was not harmed but his life at various times was threatened by his abductors”. This clause has two parts and with the set structure ‘X, but Y’. The two parts of the clause X (“he was not harmed”), but Y (“his life ... was threatened ...”) are contrastives. Although the structure is relatable to the negated opposition, especially by the inclusion of the negative marker “not”, but it should be noted that the opposites (‘not

harmed' and 'threatened') brought together here are not discourse opposites like the negated opposites ('criminals' and 'freedom fighters') treated above. The standard proposition made of the captive's (Mr. David Ward) condition here is that *he was not harmed, but threatened*. 'To harm' and 'to threaten' are obviously not antonymous. The logic then goes that when someone is not harmed, the person is most likely kept in good physical and mental condition; but in the case of this expatriate in the text, the condition is different in that he was threatened rather. Thus, the reader is invited to operate interpretative (imaginative) strategies relating to the context of being held hostage in the ND creeks (where if a hostage is released safe, then s/he should have at least been threatened or terrified) in order to believe that the two items may then be plausible contrastives. The implication, therefore, is that an 'if not this, then that' type of opposites is presented as what one can get in the condition of being held hostage in ND creeks.

## **6.5 Discussion and conclusion**

The summary of our findings in this chapter can be presented in the table below:

**Table 6.5.1 Summary of findings in chapter six**

s/ n	Media Ideology	News- papers Involved	Thematic Representation	Ideological Focus	Style & Strategy	Lexical Choices
1	PROP	NDPs and <i>The Guardian</i>	Representation of violence as war (Excerpts 1-2)	ND conflict violence is constructed as war that has to be waged to sustain the country	PERS; V/A/E	hyponyms, troponyms
			Representation of violence as threat (Excerpts 2-10)	ND conflict violence is constructed as (social, economic, and inter-relational) threat to the country	N/D, PERS; V/A/E	synonyms, IMA
2	FRAM	NNPs, NDPs	Representation of news actors in positive / negative dimension (Excerpts 11-14)	ND group is framed as violent, criminal, and evaluated and presented as threatening the social and economic progress of the country; while the FGN group is framed as frustrated but determined	EVAL; N/D	evaluative metaphors, collocations, synonyms and adjectives,

			Representation of news actors' intentions in positive / negative dimension (Excerpts 15-19)	The intentions of the ND group is presented as counterproductive and economically disastrous for the country; while those of the FGN group as positive, sincere, and the actions of its security agents evaluated and presented as professionally competent and supported by the public for the 'task'.	EVAL; N/D	evaluative collocations adjectives, metaphor and
3	MEDI	NDPs, NNPs	Representation of news actors' positions on issues as commendable / lamentable (Excerpt 20-24)	The unfavourable conditions of some other actors (e.g. kidnap experiences, ideological labels, etc.) are projected for the perpetrators (i.e. contributors to the conditions) to repent for a chance to resolve the ND conflicts.	MANI; E/C	metaphorical appositional equivalence, & intensive relational equivalence;
			Representation of news actors' conditions as (un) favourable (Excerpt 25-30)	The views of the news actors (i.e. certainty or desire to stop, or threat to continue, the conflicts) that either tally with the media's optimistic views or that the reading public should take note of, are presented	MANI; HYP	epistemic & boulomaic modality, existential & logical presupposition, implicature

Three media ideologies, as the table shows, have been observed in the data; namely, propagandist ideology (PROP), framist ideology (FRAM), and mediator ideology (MEDI). The ideologies have also been demonstrated to be associated with the four strategies employed by the newspaper reporters in their styles of conveying information on the conflict news in ND region. The stylistic strategies include: naming and describing (N/D), equating and contrasting E/C), viewing actions and events (VA/E), and hypothesising (HYP). Propagandist ideology, motivated by the persuasive styles, is associated with naming and describing, and viewing actions and events. Framist ideology, motivated by the evaluative style, is associated with only one stylistic strategy; that is, naming and describing. The mediator ideology, motivated by the manipulative style, is also manifest in two stylistic strategies – hypothesising, and equating and contrasting.

Unstructured oral interviews carried out by the researcher confirm many of the findings in the study generally. Out of the 9 interviewees used, three non-media people (two living in the ND region and one outside it) were randomly selected to confirm our findings on the issues/contexts in the ND conflict discourse (in chapter four) and six news reporters (three from the ND region and three outside it) were selected to confirm our findings on styles/strategies (chapter five) and ideological implications (chapter six). The justification for this division is that while the issues/contexts can be recognized by any layperson conversant with the conflicts, styles/strategies and their ideological implications are technical matters that are better commented on by the journalists themselves.

On why human abduction (HA) and armed struggle (AS) dominated the other SOACs identified in the ND conflict discourse, especially occurring in the cover of darkness in Delta and Bayelsa states, our respondents from the region confirmed that Delta and Bayelsa states are generally believed to be “the epi-centre of the Ijaw struggle, geographically and politically” (Interviewee 1). We were also informed that it is no surprise that AS, which HA has sadly come to be part of, is predominant in the region because “it is not an ordinary thing; it is an ideological weapon used for twisting the arm of the government” (Interviewee 1). However, another respondent claims that since the FGN and its officials have devised a means of politically discrediting the struggle and hunting down on the youth activists, “most of them have resorted to wearing masks and carrying out their struggle at night or early morning”

(Interviewee 2). On why political (POL) and ownership/resource control (ORC) issues, among the other issues in the discourse, are connected to nearly all the conflict events reported, our respondents verified that the issue of ORC “is the only issues that binds us together, and is the kernel target of the struggle; but the government is bringing many political issues to it” (Interviewee 3). He believes that every ND indigene, including the militants believes that “once the government allows us to control our resources, then there won’t be poverty in the region” (Interviewee 3).

On why majority of the reports employ the evaluative style (basically by assessing the encounters, locations, news actors and their roles) with military metaphors, our respondent corroborated that “the presence of the military JTF in the region does not end on the physical, it is also verbally conjured up on the pages of the reports to match the reality” (Interviewee 5). He further explains that it may not be peculiar with the ND region: “that’s the kind of style the media generally come up with from most militarised regions of the world” (Interviewee 5). On why the physical actions (material process) are the main anchor points for the manipulative style, it was substantiated that “even though we want to show the readers what, where, when, how these actions take place, we are also careful what or made to be careful by our editors with respect to how the readers see the actions” (Interviewee 4). She further agrees that “manipulation is a regular style; and for the case of the ND conflicts ... the actions because readers of the conflicts are more interested in what and how than where and why it happened” (Interviewee 4). On why the persuasive style is largely involved in exposing unfavourable conditions of news actors or countering the negative impressions built on them, our respondent explains that “apart from informing the reader, the media, just like marketers, indulge in a whole lot of persuasion through any means or device available, and in the case of the ND here, efforts are made towards humanitarian directions to persuade the readers and the outside world on the effects of the conflicts in the region” (Interviewee 6).

On why the newspapers (especially, NDPs) used the propaganda that the entire violence in the region is war and threat on the social, economic and political wellbeing of Nigeria, our respondent proves that “we cannot separate the media from propaganda depending on the ideological interest; and in the case of the local reports in the ND, it could be an ideological means of theorising and hence exaggerating the effects of the conflicts on the nation so as to win sympathy; that may have been a powerful rhetoric

that triggered off the amnesty consideration” (Interviewee 7). On why the ND group is framed as constituting the violence (while FGN group are struggling to curb it), our respondent agrees that “even the local media and ND people cannot deny the fact that the disturbances emanate from the militant youths, and the JFT (though it has its own issues) is just there to quell them, which degenerate into violence or conflict... Although framing people as this or that could be subjective and personal, some media houses cannot help it because, ideologically speaking, it probably serves their purpose of existence in terms of funding or connection...” (Interviewee 9). On why the reports were found to mediate between the two opposing groups in terms of projecting voices with desire or certainty for dialogue, our respondent shares the same opinion that “mediation is one of the traditional roles of the media” (Interviewee 8). He explains that despite using propaganda and framing, “the media [also] recognize their legitimate place of neutrally mediating between parties.... For example, in the ND case, the parties (almost everybody) want the crisis to end, though in their own terms; that is why the media would always struggle to identify and relate to the public areas that hold possible promise of resolving the crisis” (Interviewee 8).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

The critical stylistic framework adapted for the study made it possible for us to make a systematic and detailed account of the issues and contexts in the ND conflict discourse, styles and stylistic strategies manifest in selected English-medium newspaper reports on the ND conflicts occurring between 1997 and 2009, in order to establish the link between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices. The issues and contexts were analysed in Chapter Four; the styles and stylistic strategies were discussed in Chapter Five; while the media ideologies and the stylistic strategies through which they are achieved were explored in Chapter Six. We highlight the summary of findings recorded in these chapters.

#### 7.2 Summary of findings

The study investigated the extent to which a model of critical stylistics can establish the link that exists between lexico-stylistic choices and media ideologies through the styles, context and strategies manifest in the ND conflict newspaper reports. The samples selected for analysis in the study exhibit many interesting findings some of which are sequentially summarised below:

##### 7.2.1 Issues and contexts in the Niger Delta conflict discourse

Four issues were identified as influencing the conflicts going on in the ND discourse, they are: ownership and resource control, ecological, inter-ethnic, and political issues. Ownership and resource control issues concern the ND people's claim on absolute control of the natural resources (oil) coming from their fatherland; ecological issues relate to agitations over the effects of oil exploitation and exploration on the ND environment; inter-ethnic issues embrace all forms of intra/inter-community

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clashes resulting from sharing compensations or economic benefits accruing to the lands used by oil companies for oil activities; and political issues affect the other issues especially in terms of minority/majority divisions and perceived marginalisation. Three context categories (social action, participant role relations, and setting), influenced by the issues, were observed to constrain the lexical choices made by the news reporters in relaying information on ND conflicts. Four social actions were identified in the conflicts reported in our data; namely (in order of dominance), human abduction – HA (36.0%), armed struggle – AS (22.7%), crime control – CC (21.3%), and disruption of oil operations – DO (20.0%). With regard to the headlines reflecting the social actions, *The Tide* (42% of the NDP category) and *THISDAY* (36% of the NNP category) dominate the other newspapers in the data. The statistics showed that, within the periods considered, the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007) witnessed more conflict actions than the two years apiece considered in Abubakar (1997-98) and Yar'Adua (2008-09) tenures; however, Yar'Adua's witnessed more than Abubakar's.

The HA action is typified by two global actions, *viz.* kidnap (79.6%) and release (20.4%). *The Tide* (51.7%) and *The Guardian* (32%) dominate the other newspapers in their categories with regard to the reports of the global actions. While kidnap is marked by three frequent local actions (maiming, hijacking, and kidnapping), release is characterised by two (freeing and releasing); but two (shooting and killing) cut across them. Lexical fields and synonyms are the major lexical choices through which the experiential meanings expressed in the local actions are realised. The AS action is marked by three global actions: reprisal (44.1%), rescue (38.2%), and ethnic (17.6%) clashes, reported most by *The Tide* (40%) and *The Punch* (28.6%) in their respective categories. Reprisal is characterised by three frequent local actions (ambushing, shooting, and razing), rescue by three (searching, rescuing, and demolishing), while ethnic goes by two (burning and wounding). However, four local actions (storming, attacking, exchanging gunfire, and killing) cut across them. Technical vocabulary and metaphors from the domain of military combat are the lexical indices of these local actions. Three global actions characterise the CC action: apprehension (59.4%), amnesty (25%), and prosecution (15.6%). Here, *Pioneer* (50%) and *The Guardian* (28.6%), in their respective categories, recorded the highest of these global actions. Apprehension includes three frequent local actions (arresting, parading, apprehending), amnesty involves two (meeting and laying down of arms), while

prosecution comprises three (arraigning, convicting or granting bail). Lexical similarity chain is the basic lexical pattern found in the social actions here. The DO action is characterised by two global actions: vandalism (56.7%), and interruption (43.3%). *The Tide* and *The Pointer* (with 37.7% tie) and *THISDAY* (37.5%) dominate the newspapers in their categories. Vandalisation is marked by two frequent local actions (vandalising and blowing up), while interruption is typified by three (seizing, shutting down, and taking over). Generally, collocations, non-technical vocabulary, and lexical fields are the lexical choices found with the local actions in this category.

Three types of participant roles were identified: the ND insurgent group, the FGN group, and the press and readers. The role relations amongst the participant are realised in two forms: interactional and communicative role relations. Interactional role relations involves FGN group and ND group as, for example, vandalisers/vandalised, bombers/bombed, preventers/prevented, etc (in DO); as paraders/paraded, convicts/convicted, arms collectors/ arms droppers, etc (in CC); as shooters/shot, rescuers/dispossessed, etc (in AS); and as kidnappers/kidnapped, freedom givers/freed, etc (in HA). The interactive roles of the press include: evaluating categories in the news, manipulating and persuading the reader by way of seeking and giving information. Communicative role relations involves the information-giving group (e.g. witnesses) and information-seeking group (e.g. newspaper correspondents), which all the participants take part in.

In the analysis of setting, the study revealed two broad locations of the social actions: oil-production (oil-exploration and oil-servicing areas) and residential area (urban, rural and creek areas). The creek area (47.1%) witnessed the highest occurrences of vandalism, while the rural (38.5%) experienced the utmost incidence of interruption in DO. The urban area, however, did not experience any case of vandalism, except for one instance of interruption. This may be logical as the area (urban) recorded the highest portion (21.9%) of apprehension, while the rural area (9.4%) topped the chart in the response to amnesty. In CC, the creeks experienced the highest of rescue (23.5%) and ethnic clashes (14.7%), while the oil-servicing area (17.6%) saw the most of reprisal clashes. The urban and oil-servicing areas did not involve in ethnic clashes at all. Finally, in HA, the oil-servicing (37%) and urban areas (20%) witnessed the most kidnap and release global actions. Cumulatively, Delta and Bayelsa states predominate the other states in terms of the locations (communities) for

the social actions. The timing of the social actions were found to be predominantly in the early morning hours or in the dark except for the CC actions, which are carried out in the day time.

### **7.2.2 Styles and stylistic strategies in the Niger Delta conflict discourse**

Three styles are identified as used by the newspaper reporters – evaluative, manipulative, and persuasive styles – which are generally influenced by the primary need of the news reporter to inform the readers. Four stylistic strategies are observed through which the styles are realised; namely: naming and describing, equating and contrasting, viewing actions and events, and hypothesising.

The evaluative style is marked by the expression of attitude in terms of positive or negative assessment. Four categories are evaluated in the data, (*viz.* the violent encounters, the locations of the encounters, the news actors involved, and their roles), which are connected to the issues in the ND conflict discourse. For instance, the encounters evaluated are associated with ownership and resource control issues, location with ecological issues, while the news actors and their roles are evaluated in terms of inter-ethnic and political issues in the discourse. Both the NDPs and NNPs employ the evaluative style. The style is associated with one stylistic strategy, naming and describing, which allows the news reporter to ascribe evaluative names to entities in the discourse. Two broad linguistic patterns of naming have been observed; namely: metaphorisation (the choice of an emotive metaphor to indicate a referent) and noun modification (the construction of a noun group with modifiers to further include the reporter's view on the nature of the referent).

Emotive metaphors are sourced from three domains; military, crime and hunting. Military metaphors are largely employed especially in describing the encounters, with the three metaphorical codes: WAR IS INTERACTION, RESCUE IS WAR, and SECURITY INTERVENTION IS ASSAULT. The war-as-interaction metaphors cut across the two sets (NDPs and NNPs) of newspapers; the rescue-as-war metaphors are largely used by the NNPs' while the security intervention-as-assault metaphors are used by the NDPs. Crime metaphors relate to the news actors involved and their roles in the encounters, with the metaphorical codes: THE MILITANT IS A TROUBLE MAKER and THE SECURITY AGENT IS A CLEANER. The militant-as-trouble maker metaphors are largely employed by the NNPs, while both the NDPs

and NNPs freely utilise the security agent-as-cleaner metaphors. Hunting metaphors are used to evaluate the locations of encounter, with one metaphorical code: ENCOUNTER LOCATION IS AN ANIMAL HABITAT. They generally used both by the NNPs and NDPs.

Contextually, the encounters are evaluated (named) based on the materials involved, the degree of seriousness, the manner or tactics involved, the social motivation; the news actors are evaluated with respect to their appearances, their positions in their groups, and their discourse labels; the news actors' roles are named in view of the group membership division in the discourse (between the FGN or ND groups) while locations are assessed based on the people residing in them and the frequency of contact of the two opposing groups of news actors.

Noun modification is another linguistic means through which the naming/describing strategy is achieved by allowing news reporters include their personal opinions in the description of the head noun. The noun group is utilised for naming through its pre-/post-modifiers, which may include evaluative nouns and adjectives. Thus, the two devices for the naming/describing strategy (metaphorisation and modification) draw principally on evaluative nouns and adjectives, which largely appear as synonyms and collocations in evaluating entities. However, while metaphorisation uses more of pre-modifying adjectives and the noun heads, modification utilises more of adjective and noun as post-modifiers.

The manipulative style involves the reporter's use of calculated language with an underlying message aimed at influencing the reader. All the NNPs and *Pioneer* (which is a NDP) employ the manipulative style. The manipulative style is motivated by three contextual categories: setting, participant role relations and social action, which in turn constrain three linguistic devices: agency deletion and Gricean maxim violation. The style is associated with one stylistic strategy – i.e. viewing actions and events – which utilises the verbal element of the clause in presenting situations in the discourse. Two linguistic devices have been identified for the strategy: thematisation and nominalisation, which largely utilise the transitivity model the most typical process type of which is the material (out of the four main types of process). The strategies affect both lexical verbs and their modifiers. The lexical verbs have been put into two main patterns for the manipulation; namely: introducing lexical items bearing unconscious beings as Agents of material process, and the changing of lexical verb

bearing the processes into existing entities. Introducing unconscious beings favours the intentional material action (IMA) which allows the reporters to thematise and hence lay emphasis on the result of material actions rather than the actual agents of the actions. Changing actions to existing entities is achieved through nominalisation, where the reporter changes and hence captures the actions performed by some news actors as nouns thereby attracting less probing. The lexical verb modifiers utilises the reporting verbs which allows the narrators to distance themselves from subjectivity and direct the reader to see them and their newspaper organisation as neutral.

The persuasive style relies on the position of the news reporter to sell certain ideas in the news text to the reader. The style is also influenced by the ND issues and contexts identified earlier. The style is largely used by both the NNPs and NDPs (especially, *Pioneer*). The style is generally realised through voice attribution and illocution. Two stylistic strategies, observed to have been used by both the news reporters and news actors, have been identified in the data through which this style is achieved. They are: equating and contrasting, and hypothesising. The equating and contrasting strategy relies on creating new equivalences (to expose some unfavourable conditions faced by some actors in the news), and opposition (to counter certain impression built on some people or issues). Equivalence is textually constructed with three syntactic structures: appositional equivalence, metaphorical equivalence, and intensive relational equivalence, while opposition is constructed with four syntactic triggers: negated opposition, concessive opposition, replacive opposition, and contrastives. In hypothesising, the news reporters explicitly introduce their (or the news actors') viewpoint by producing an alternative text world that the reader may potentially be influenced by. Hypothesising utilises two broad types of modality, showing epistemic meaning, and boulomaic meaning. The epistemic modality is characterised in the data by modal adverbs, adjective, auxiliaries, and lexical verb, which mainly show likelihood or low certainty; while boulomaic modality is typified by conditional structures, lexical verbs, and modal auxiliaries, which express desire.

### **7.2.3 Ideological implications of styles and stylistic strategies**

Three media ideologies have been identified as implied from the styles and strategies used by the newspaper reporters in conveying information with regard to ND

conflicts. They include: propagandist ideology, framist ideology and mediator ideology.

### **7.2.3.1 Propagandist ideology**

Propagandist ideology, motivated by the persuasive style, is associated with two stylistic strategies – naming and describing, and viewing actions and events. The strategies are both manifested in the thematic representation of the ND violence as war and as threat with respect to the roles of the news participants involved. Propagandist ideology is largely used by the NDPs and *The Guardian* (which is an NNP). Metaphorical and synonymous collocations prevail in the lexical choices for naming the violence categories, while hyponymous, troponymous and intentional material actions dominate the transitivity choices for viewing the actions and events. Through these lexical categories, the violence is, thus, constructed as war and (social, economic, and inter-relational) threat to the country, where the reader is persuaded that the ND insurgents are the primary contributors to the violence, while the FGN security agents are excused for being dragged into it by virtue of doing their peace-keeping job.

### **7.2.3.2 Framist ideology**

Framist ideology, motivated by the evaluative style, is associated with only one stylistic strategy; that is, naming and describing, realised from the representation of the news participants and the intentions behind their actions in the discourse in positive/negative basis. The naming and describing strategy aids the news writers in evaluating and framing the news participants and their intentions – typically with evaluative adjectives and metaphors, and synonymous labels and collocations. Both the NNPs and NDPs employ the framist ideology; however, the NNPs dominate. The ND youth activists are, therefore, framed as violent, criminal, and evaluated and presented as threatening the social and economic progress of the country; while the FGN are framed as frustrated but determined, (its intentions) positive, sincere, and the actions of its security agents evaluated and presented as professionally competent and supported by the public for the ‘task’.

### **7.2.3.3 Mediator ideology**

The mediator ideology, motivated by the manipulative style, is also manifest in two stylistic strategies – hypothesising, and equating and contrasting – employed in

the representation of news participant's positions on issues in the news as commendable/lamentable, and their conditions in the discourse as (un)favourable. The ideology is used by both NDPs and NNPs, but the NDPs however dominate. Hypothesising relates to the representation of news participants' positions operationalised with a tripartite linguistic model, *viz.* the modality system (with epistemic, and boulomaic meaning), the concept of presupposition (existential and logical), and implicature (especially, quantity and relevance). The equating and contrasting strategy, on the other hand, deals with the representation of the participants' conditions, where equating is triggered by appositional equivalence and intensive relational equivalence, while contrasting is marked by negated opposites and contrastives. Through these lexical indicators, such views of the news participants (i.e. certainty or desire to stop, or threat to continue, the conflicts) that either tally with the media's optimistic views or that the reading public should take note of, are privileged. In the same way, the unfavourable conditions of some other participants (e.g. kidnap experiences, ideological labels, etc.) are projected for the perpetrators (i.e. contributors to the conditions) to repent for a chance to resolve the ND conflicts.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

#### **7.3.1 Contributions of the study**

This study has investigated the styles, contexts and strategies that manifest in Nigerian newspaper reports on ND conflicts in order to establish the link between lexico-stylistic choices and media ideologies in the reports. This was carried out using a critical stylistic model developed from the modified versions of Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics, van Dijk's (2001) context models, and insights from evaluative (lexical) semantics and conceptual metaphor. While the principles prescribed by the theories were essentially followed, the study has introduced, as a contribution to the studies on ideology, a new dimension in our model analysis, which is strictly applicable to ND conflict discourse. This includes the issue-context interface, which induces the ND conflict on the one hand, and constrains the styles, strategies, media ideologies and their lexical indices, on the other.

The study has also moved media studies on the ND conflict discourse a few steps forward from its extant knowledge. Major linguistic studies (e.g. Ayoola, 2008; Chilwa, 2007, 2011a, 2011b) have individually utilised stylistic, pragmatic and CDA

tools in exploring the discourse features and strategies, and the attitude of the press in representing the ND news participants, which the present study found insufficient in handling news reports on the conflicts. Thus, instead of focusing on the linguistic and contextual aspects of the media reports alone like the previous studies, the study principally incorporates context-oriented stylistic and socio-cognitive CDA tools in exploring the link between the media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices in the reports. Therefore, by way of contributing to the pool of knowledge on media discourse, the study has successfully taken a nearly pioneering new path in the linguistic investigation of the discourse of violence, especially with respect to the critical stylistic model it used.

The analytical framework proposed is, therefore, a major aid in carrying out a systematic and thorough analysis of conflict discourse, especially at the lexical level. It is also hoped that the approach will contribute to the development of a reliable framework for the critical study of the nuances of language in different modes of texts. More specifically, it is expected that the findings will provide some linguistic (lexical) insights, stylistic strategies, and critical tools that can support analysts/scholars in realising some of the ideological practices behind the news text.

### **7.3.2 Applications of the study**

The study shows the relevance of linguists and linguistic (stylistic) studies for the effective understanding and resolution of social problems. It also demonstrates the importance of critical reading for the interpretation of discourse in general and media-political discourse in particular. The findings of the study can, therefore, be applied to the Nigerian political terrain as new light is expected to be shed on the linguistic and ideological bases of the recurrent conflicts (e.g. human trafficking, kidnapping, vandalism, terrorism, etc) not only in the ND but all over Nigeria. Precisely, the study can proffer practical interpretations for the reader (and other stakeholders) in the resolution of the ND crisis. In general, the work should also be useful in the global investigation of the cognitive drive and group-inducement of violence, especially as reproduced by the media. Furthermore, as a stylistic study, it can also be applied to pedagogy. In this way, it provides us with a critical meta-language which can be taught and learnt, and through the systematic interpretations in the analysis, students can



formulate their intuitive reactions to a text in an explicit and more easily teachable way.

### **7.3.3. Limitations of the study**

Two obvious limitations of the study have been observed; namely: a. the study concentrated on newspaper reports alone among many other print news genres; b. it did not utilise other levels of language (apart from the lexical) in its analysis. Considering other news genres in the study would have been more insightful and provided a holistic picture of the ND conflict discourse. In the same vein, exploring other language levels in the analysis of data would have yielded more representative findings. In view of these, therefore, firm conclusions about the universality of the model analysis and its findings cannot be drawn. Thus, the relationships between the variables (media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices) must be interpreted and applied with caution. A representative model, however, can only be drawn by analysing other print news genres across the levels of language.

### **7.3.4 Suggestions for further studies**

In order to get a more holistic view of the ND conflict discourse, other studies can still be undertaken to complement the present one, especially: a. on other genres of the print news text other than the newspaper report that constitutes our data here; and b. on other levels of language apart from the lexical that has been handled in the present study. For example, aside the newspaper report, studies can be carried out on other genres (e.g. editorials, commentaries, interviews, etc), focusing on other related discourse issues (e.g. presentation of voice; representation of time, space and society, etc), and employing other interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. semiotics and stylistics, phonology and pragmatics, etc). Language scholars may also be interested in how these discourse issues are expressed in the news genres through such other levels of language as the semantic, morpho-syntactic, rhetorical, phonological levels. These areas suggested leave opportunities for both general and applied linguists, sociolinguists, stylisticians, pragmaticians and discourse analysts to undertake a wide range of research studies.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

List of the newspaper excerpts used in the analysis:

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<b>s/n</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Story/Activity</b>	<b>Text No.</b>	<b>Chapter/Excerpt No.</b>
<b><i>THISDAY</i></b>				
1	Jan. 29, 2001	Disruption of Oil operations	A24	4/6
2	Mar. 3, 2004	Crime Control	B26	4/13
3	Oct. 23, 2004	Crime Control	B27	4/28
4	Jan. 4, 2009	Disruption of Oil operations	A18	4/32
5	Mar. 1, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A22	4/35
6	Mar. 31, 2006	Armed Struggle	C26	5/4
7	Oct. 3, 2006	Armed Struggle	C22	5/6
8	May 16, 2009	Armed Struggle	C24	5/8
9	Mar. 11, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A22	5/21
10	Feb. 26, 2006	Armed Struggle	C25	5/25
11	Apr. 21, 2004	Armed Struggle	C28	5/26
12	May 16, 2009	Armed Struggle	C24	5/29
13	Jan. 4, 2009	Disruption of Oil operations	A18	5/41
14	May 15, 1998	Disruption of Oil operations	A19	5/45
15	May 16, 2009	Armed Struggle	C24	6/5
16	Jul. 7, 2009	Disruption of Oil operations	A29	6/6
17	Mar. 31, 2006	Armed Struggle	C26	6/9
18	Oct. 29, 2009	Crime Control	B24	6/19
19	Oct. 2, 2009	Crime Control	B23	6/20
20	Oct. 6, 2007	Human Abduction	D42	6/30
<b><i>The Guardian</i></b>				
21	Sep. 3, 2003	Disruption of Oil operations	A17	4/2
22	Oct. 6, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A16	4/8
23	Nov. 22, 1999	Human Abduction	D47	4/18
24	Jan. 1, 2007	Crime Control	B20	4/20
25	Sep. 3, 2005	Disruption of Oil operations	A17	4/34
26	Mar. 10, 2006	Armed Struggle	C21	5/7
27	Jul. 16, 2004	Crime Control	B21	5/15
28	Oct. 6, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A16	5/19
29	Jan. 1, 2007	Crime Control	B20	5/32
30	Jul. 26, 1999	Human Abduction	D46	5/40
31	Dec. 21, 2006	Human Abduction	D54	5/44
32	Mar. 31, 2008	Human Abduction	D49	6/4
33	Jul. 26, 1999	Human Abduction	D46	6/12
34	Sep. 3, 2005	Disruption of Oil operations	A17	6/22
35	May 22, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A20	6/24
36	Nov. 9, 2006	Human Abduction	D41	6/26
<b><i>THE PUNCH</i></b>				
37	Mar. 31, 2006	Armed Struggle	C26	4/16
38	Aug. 11, 2007	Human Abduction	D4	4/17
39	Jul. 6, 1999	Crime Control	B2	5/5
40	Apr. 19, 2005	Armed Struggle	C29	5/12
41	Jul. 3, 2007	Armed Struggle	C31	5/14

42	Oct. 29, 2008	Armed Struggle	C30	5/28
43	Jul. 24, 2009	Crime Control	B31	5/31
44	Sep. 20, 1999	Disruption of Oil operations	A30	5/33
45	Aug. 11, 1999	Human Abduction	D35	5/35
46	Jul. 3, 2007	Armed Struggle	C31	6/7
47	Jul. 16, 2000	Disruption of Oil operations	A31	6/18
48	Mar. 11, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A22	6/25
<b><i>Vanguard</i></b>				
49	Dec. 11, 2007	Human Abduction	D35	4/1
50	Aug. 14, 2008	Crime Control	B29	4/11
51	Aug. 1, 2008	Human Abduction	D38	4/23
52	Nov. 7, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A25	4/33
53	May 2, 2004	Disruption of Oil operations	A26	5/3
54	Aug. 21, 2008	Human Abduction	D50	5/20
55	Nov. 7, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A25	5/22
56	Feb. 16, 2005	Armed Struggle	C27	5/30
57	Nov. 7, 2005	Disruption of Oil operations	A25	6/13
58	Jan. 4, 1999	Crime Control	B28	6/14
<b><i>Pioneer</i></b>				
59	Oct. 3, 2007	Armed Struggle	C1	4/3
60	Jan. 25, 2007	Crime Control	B10	4/10
61	Nov. 19, 2007	Crime Control	B9	4/12
62	Apr. 9, 2008	Human Abduction	D3	4/19
63	May 27, 2009	Armed Struggle	C2	4/22
64	May 18, 2009	Armed Struggle	C3	5/9
65	May 31, 2009	Armed Struggle	C15	5/11
66	Oct. 10, 2006	Human Abduction	D7	5/17
67	May 27, 2009	Armed Struggle	C2	5/24
68	Oct. 3, 2004	Armed Struggle	C1	5/36
69	Jul. 12, 2009	Crime Control	B3	5/42
70	Sep. 13, 2007	Human Abduction	D5	5/43
71	May 21, 2009	Human Abduction	D8	5/46
72	May 18, 2009	Armed Struggle	C3	6/2
73	Apr. 9, 2008	Human Abduction	D3	6/3
74	Aug. 23, 2009	Crime Control	B1	6/27
75	Apr. 10, 2009	Crime Control	B2	6/29
<b><i>The Tide</i></b>				
76	May 9, 2007	Disruption of Oil operations	A3	4/7
77	Mar. 8, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A5	4/9
78	Jun. 22, 2007	Armed Struggle	C11	4/14
79	Apr. 28, 2008	Armed Struggle	C8	4/21
80	Aug. 17, 2007	Armed Struggle	C9	4/27
81	Apr. 15, 2007	Armed Struggle	C10	4/29
82	Jan. 31, 2006	Human Abduction	D25	4/31
83	Aug. 26, 2006	Crime Control	B25	5/2
84	Aug. 17, 2007	Armed Struggle	C9	5/13
85	Aug. 22, 2006	Armed Struggle	C13	5/37

86	Aug. 11, 2006	Human Abduction	D21	6/11
87	Aug. 17, 2007	Armed Struggle	C9	6/15
88	Aug. 20, 2008	Crime Control	B23	6/23
<i>New Waves</i>				
89	Jul. 27, 2008	Human Abduction	D28	4/25
90	Jun. 6, 2008	Crime Control	B13	4/30
91	Nov. 10, 2004	Disruption of Oil operations	A12	4/36
92	May 14, 2007	Human Abduction	D6	5/1
93	Dec. 17, 2004	Human Abduction	D9	5/34
94	Dec. 17, 2004	Human Abduction	D9	6/21
95	Oct. 9, 2004	Human Abduction	D16	6/28
<i>The Pointer</i>				
96	Jan. 2, 2008	Armed Struggle	C16	4/24
97	Oct. 16, 1999	Human Abduction	D27	5/23
98	Jan. 25, 2006	Disruption of Oil operations	A10	5/27
99	Jan. 18, 2006	Armed Struggle	C17	6/1
100	May 31, 2009	Armed Struggle	C15	6/15
101	Oct. 3, 2007	Armed Struggle	C1	6/17

**Newspapers and stories with dates selected in the analysis**

## **Appendix II**

Unstructured interviews for the confirmation of findings:

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**Researcher:**

Sir, we found out that armed struggle and human abduction dominated other social actions like crime control, disruption of oil operations, which we identified in our data. How would you comment on these findings?

**Interviewee 1:**

It cannot be surprising; in fact, it may even be normal in the struggle ideology of the Niger Delta people. Armed struggle, it is not an ordinary thing; it is an ideological weapon used for twisting the arm of the government. It is only saddening that some other youths have involved kidnapping for monetary reasons, killing and maiming innocent citizen all in the name of the Niger Delta cause.

**Researcher:**

Sir, our study covers the entire Niger Delta, but among the four states we concentrated on – Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers, it was discovered that Delta first, then Bayelsa states were the places worst hit by these conflicts or struggle. What comments would you want to add to these findings sir?

**Interviewee 1:**

Of course, in fact, in the Niger Delta, we know as it is generally believed that the epicentre of the Ijaw struggle, geographically and politically. This is because that's where we have most of the problems – oil spillage, wasted farmlands, tribal wars, and what have you. In fact, if check the history books, you will also find out that the palm oil sales of old were carried out around these two states. There are no Ijaws in Akwa Ibom state, and this Niger Delta struggle is generally taken as Ijaw struggle, and the Ijaws are predominantly in Bayelsa State and Delta State.

**Researcher:**

In terms of time, the conflict activities were also found to occur mainly in the cover of darkness, for instance, in the night or early in the morning; why would that be sir?

**Interviewee 2:**

Well, whether we like it or not, when such struggle activities that have been proscribed and criticised by the government, what do you expect. If the government and JTF has [sic] learned to criticise the Niger Delta militants, then most of them have resorted to wearing masks and carrying out their struggle at night or early morning; because at the

end of the day, after amnesty, maybe for political reasons or, nobody wants to be pointed out as the person that was championing the militants. You saw what they did to Asari Dokubo, for example?

**Researcher:**

Sir, as we found out in our study, issues that have to do with politics and ownership and resource control among others, are the predominant issues that motivate the conflicts in the Niger Delta region. Do you have anything contrary to these findings?

**Interviewee 3:**

Well for government politics on the fundamental issues in the region, government activities and development is [sic] not felt in any part of the region. You feel marginalised economically, infrastructurally [sic], even psychologically. And this is what motivates the second issues you mentioned – resource control – and other crisis in this region. In fact, it is the only issues that binds [sic] us together, and is the kernel target of the struggle; but the government is bringing many political issues to it. Every Niger Delta indigene, including the militants believes that once the government allows us to control our resources, then there won't be poverty in the region; we will have reached the Promised Land.

**Researcher:**

The newspaper reports, as we discovered, employ the manipulative style; but one thing that is peculiar here is their use of physical actions as the main anchor points, the main object, for manipulation. Could you substantiate that sir?

**Interviewee 4:**

Yes of course, there is always a little bit manipulation in every aspect of news reporting, but that is not to say that we don't report the facts. Things happen, actions take place; even though we want to show the readers what, where, when, how these actions take place, we are also careful what or made to be careful by our editors with respect to how the readers see the actions. I think the manipulative style, manipulation is a regular style; and for the case of the ND conflicts, probably because of the sensitive nature of the issues and the volatile nature of the region, things have to be manipulated, and in this case, the actions because readers of the conflicts are more interested in what and how than where and why it happened. Even from editorial and



legal angle [sic], we call it mediation, If the editors don't mediate over some things, then they should be read to go in and out of law suits.

**Researcher:**

What would you say is the reason why the majority of the reports employ the evaluative style, especially with military metaphors in assessing the conflict encounters, the locations of the encounters, the news actors involved and their roles in the encounters?

**Interviewee 5:**

Yes sir, well to me it is a military warfare. The JMTF is a military setup and the boys in the Niger Delta are trained, they are soldiers in their own way, so. The presence of the military JTF in the region does not end on the physical, it is also verbally conjured up on the pages of the reports to match the reality. Of course, this kind of style has been noticed around the world, that's the kind of style the media generally come up with from most militarised regions of the world; go and check.

**Researcher:**

Sir, the analysis of our study revealed that the newspaper persuasive style is largely used, especially for the case of the Niger Delta, it is involved in exposing unfavourable conditions of news actors or countering the negative impressions built on them. Do you have a contrary opinion on these findings sir?

**Interviewee 6:**

Well, I know for sure that apart from informing the reader, the media, just like marketers, indulge in a whole lot of persuasion through any means or device available, and in the case of the ND here, efforts are made towards humanitarian directions to persuade the readers and the outside world on the effects of the conflicts in the region. So, I think the whole business of the media, ranging from advert to news commentaries and reports are [sic] persuasive in nature.

**Researcher:**

Sir, as we all know propaganda is found a lot in the media, but in our own case here, especially with the Niger Delta-based newspapers, propaganda is used to make the

entire violence in the region look like war and threat on the social, economic and political wellbeing of Nigeria. What is your comment on that sir?

**Interviewee 7:**

I agree, we cannot separate the media from propaganda depending on the ideological interest; and in the case of the local reports in the Niger Delta region, it could be an ideological means of theorising and hence exaggerating the effects of the conflicts on the nation so as to win sympathy; that may have been a powerful rhetoric that triggered off the amnesty consideration. So, I see propaganda as a media tool to channel their views on any issues in the society, thank you.

**Researcher:**

Our newspaper reports, in what we termed ‘mediator ideology’ in our study, were found to be used to mediate between the two opposing groups – projecting voices with desire or certainty to dialogue with the opposing parties in terms of resolving the crisis. What is your take on this sir?

**Interviewee 8:**

Yes, I share the same opinion that mediation is one of the traditional roles of the media. But of course, we thank God that, professionally, the media recognize their legitimate place of neutrally mediating between parties, especially when there is a situation as sensitive as the Niger Delta. For example, in the Niger Delta case, the parties (almost everybody) want the crisis to end, though in their own terms; that is why the media would always struggle to identify and relate to the public areas that hold possible promise of resolving the crisis. So, that’s the essence of mediation or mediationist role of the media there.

**Researcher:**

In one of the ideologies we discovered in the course of our analysis, the framist or framing ideology, the ND activists and militants are particularly framed as the ones largely constituting the violence in the region, while FGN group is struggling to curb it. Would you agree to these findings?

**Interviewee 9:**

Well agreeable to that on two bases: one, that even the local media and ND people cannot deny the fact that the disturbances emanate from the militant youths, and the

JFT (though it has its own issues) is just there to quell them, which degenerate into violence or conflict. This is the fact of the matter. Then, there is another side to it. Although framing people as this or that could be subjective and personal, some media houses cannot help it because, ideologically speaking, it probably serves their purpose of existence in terms of funding or connection or what have you.

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### **Appendix III**

Selected national and Niger Delta-based newspaper reports:

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